MASTER OF HIS FATE

AMELIA E. BARR

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By

AMELIA E. BARR

New York

Dodd, Mead & Company

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MASTER OF HIS FATE.

A TALE OF THE WEST RIDING.

CHAPTER I.

THE OWNER OF BEVIN MILL.

The day was made
To number out the hours of busy men;
Let them be busy still, and still be wretched,
And take their fill of anxious drudging day.

—DRYDEN.

So sullenly addicted still
To his one principle, his will,
That whatsoe'er it chanced to prove,
No force of argument could move;
For obstinacy's ne'er so stiff
As when 'tis in a wrong belief.

—HUDIBRAS.

THE tree God plants no wind hurts. It is shaken by tempests and drenched with rains. The dew and the sunshine nourish it. It grows to fair proportions, and brings forth fruit in its season. So also is the man whom God makes. He is chastened by sorrow. He

has the discipline of patience and of disappointment. He has the comforts of love and the sweet surprises of godsends. All the capabilities of his nature are drawn out and perfected. He turns his face to the sunshine, and is gracious and blessed in all his ways.

The self-made man, as the word is generally understood, is different. He has built up a great business, but he has neglected himself. He has made beautiful his dwelling, but forgotten to ennoble the man who is to inhabit the splendid rooms. He is stunted in all his senses but those necessary for making money. His nature remains incomplete, and there is small hope of any grander development, because he is perfectly satisfied with his own work.

Sooner or later, however, if God be merciful to them, these architects of a special manhood find out the magnitude of their limitations. Reluctantly they are forced to admit that, though they control money, they can not control things not to be bought with money, love, respect, and obedience. They discover that the honor of the market-place does not include that far more impartial judgment of their own

households, where they are weighed in a truer balance, and found often to be grievously wanting.

Amos Braithwaite was a self-made man, and he asserted the circumstance whenever he could with a consequential satisfaction. Every one who knew him, and many who did not know him, had heard the little bluster of affected humility in which he was wont to complacently state his own case.

"I weren't born wi' a silver spoon i' my mouth, not I! When I wer' a lad I sell'd papers i' Bradford Market, and I'm proud of it to-day, I am that! I'd no father or mother to advise me, and I niver hed a day's schooling; but I wer' determined to git on, and I *did* git on. All I know I learn'd mysen. All t'money I hev I made mysen. *And look at me now!* There's many a swell as thinks himsen summat extra wi' his fine schooling as I could buy out and out to-day. And thou knows it's so, eh, Martha?"

He was delivering his favorite oration to his sister-in-law, Miss Martha Thrale, a shrewd, handsome Yorkshire woman, who had managed his household affairs ever since the death

of her sister, nearly twenty years previous. She was quite familiar with it in all its variations, yet when he said, "And look at me now!" she lifted her eyes a moment from her knitting and looked at him.

What she saw was a tall, stout man with a head whose chief strength and mass was in the hinder part, a man strong, rough, elemental, with a firm will, a choleric temperament, and a great energy for self-service. His dexterity of mind and acuteness of judgment were indicated, not only by his keen gray eyes, but by the way in which their lids were drawn horizontally over them. Still, though the large corneas gave an animal expression to the face, the whole head indicated nobler possibilities of character, for the mid-region was well arched, and it was not unlikely that, under favorable circumstances, feeling would rule intellect, and the calculating selfish element vanish before an earnest and fervent affection

He stood upon the handsome hearthrug with his legs planted well apart, as firm on the broad basis of his self-complacency as the pyramids on the desert; and his hands were clasped beneath his own coat-tails. This coat was of

cloth of his own manufacture, good, substantial cloth, made in a manner as uncompromising and unfashionable as its wearer. A stolid, solid, upright, downright man, with plenty of sinew and bone to carry out whatever his mind planned or his will determined.

"And look at me now!"

So Martha Thrale looked at him for a moment ere she answered: "Some folks do think as thou hest done varry well to thysen, Amos."

"So I hev. Varry well, indeed! I hev niver wanted either friends or enemies; and I'll tell thee what, Martha, one sort hes happen helped me, just as much as t'other sort. I've niver counted friends and I've never feared enemies. And I sud like our Joe to do just as I hev done, and to be just such a man as his father is."

"I sud think thou would like to bring up a son as could show there could be somebody a bit better than thee."

Amos looked angrily at her. He had often said that "Martha Thrale wasn't like t' rest o' women folk, made o' wax, or some such stuff;" and he saw and understood the settled look upon her large, calm face.

"So our Joe hes been trying to get round thee, hes he? Sure-ly to goodness, thou isn't going to help t' lad in his folly! As ta never did such a thing before, I'm surprised as thou sud do it now; I am that, Martha!"

"Thou hesn't reckoned up our Joe correctly. There is a deal in Joe that niver was in thee, Amos."

"I sud hope not. Now, then, hear what I hev to say. I'll hev none o' his rubbishy, romancing books. He's a deal better among t' wool-bags than spoiling good paper wi' bad poetry. There's all t' poetry anybody need hev in that Wesleyan hymn-book o' thine. I know our Joe, and I know there is no more poetry in his head than there is in 'Bradshaw's Railway Guide.' *I'll not hev it there anyhow!* Let him stick to t' mill. I reckon nowt o' a man that talks against what brings in good money. It's mean as mean can be. Thou knows that."

"I think our Joe sud hev a chance to follow out his own inclinations. Ivery bird flies best with its awn feathers."

"Joe hesn't got any feathers of his awn. He'll hev to come to me for t' ways and means

to do his flying. But I tak' notice that young fellows in these days can allays read their title clear to whativer t' old man hes that takes their fancy."

"Most fathers would be proud of a fine lad like our Joe. In t' way of study, nothing beats him. He is all for learning t' French language now, and he's found out somebody that can teach him how to talk it, and help him a bit with his violin beside. Joe tak's to music like a bird to its song. He does that, Amos."

"Whativer are we getting to, Martha? Thou fair caps me! I'll hev no French and fiddling in my house; mind that now! French indeed! I wonder to goodness who educates them foreign creatures? I could not mak' sense o' a word the man spoke when I met him wi' Joe."

"And he didn't understand thee, I'll be bound."

"I speak good Yorkshire, and that's the best o' good English going. Joe's mother wer' allays reading poetry. It's bad for a lad when he has hed a mother given to poetry and nonsense. T'lad might hev done varry well but for her heving a bee in her bonnet."

"I think thou hed better say nothing at a'

of Joe's mother, Amos. Thou knew varry little about her. That was thy loss, not hers."

"I sud think I know summat about my awn wife, Martha."

"Thou knew nothing of her. How could ta? Thou wert that throng making money that thy home was nobbut a place to eat and sleep in, while t' engine stopped. I'll say this for my sister Ann: if ta hed known her thou would hev thought more of her."

"We wer' speaking o' Joe, and not of thy sister Ann. And as for Joe Braithwaite, I'll hev no high-flown ideas put into his head by a lot o' women and schoolmasters. It is more than a bit thy fault, and thou knows it, Martha. Before t' lad hed his first breeches on, thou wert telling him all sorts o' lies about fairy folk: thet's so!" and Amos looked reproachfully into Martha's face.

The look upon that face was something new to him. It meant rebellion on his own hearthstone. In twenty years he had seen nothing like it. If a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet it could scarcely have amazed him more. There was a spirit of revolt in Martha's very silence. The click of her knitting-needles

seemed to be contradicting him, and he felt the necessity of instantly asserting himself.

Under such circumstances he naturally took his stand upon his success in business. That was a subject a woman ought naturally to feel snubbed by. She could not emulate him. And she could not criticise him, at least with any show of propriety or justice. So he added with a fine tolerance, "Thou hes been too soft wi' Joe. Thet is a woman's way. But it's a' wrong. When Joe puts himsen raythor too for'ard, I wonder thou didn't say a few words that would hev taken t' sharp edge off his fine talk. Nobody can do that better than thee. Thou sud hev said—"

"What sud I hev said?'

"'Look at thy father, Joe! See what a big fortune he hes made!'"

"One would think, Amos, that thou hed done some great and good action in making thy awn fortune. Laying up money for thysen! Does ta think that entitles thee to t' love and gratitude of thy fellow-creatures? I don't believe they think so, my lad."

"Don't thee try to be sarcastic wi' me, Martha. I don't mind thy words. I hev made

nearly half a million o' pounds. What is a few words to figures like them, eh?"

"Half a million o' pounds!—they are nothing if thou puts them against real goodness and knowledge."

"Nothing!" gasped Amos; then, with the contempt such a statement, in his opinion, deserved, he answered: "Thou art talking for talking's sake. Women are a foolish lot. Is there aught i' this world better than honestly earned money?"

"Ay, there is; and what's more, t' Bible upholds me in saying so. For it makes out that wisdom is better than gold, and knowledge better than rubies and fine gold."

"I niver heard such things."

"How could ta hear them? Thou niver goes to church or to chapel, and thou niver reads aught but t' newspapers. If anybody sud quote t' New Testament to thee it would be so unlike any o' thy notions that thou would be sure to think t' words were written by some one as wanted to turn t' world upside down with their foolishness."

"Say no more, Martha; say no more! It's fair nonsense arguing wi' women. T' long and

t' short of it is, I'll hev Joe think as I think, and do as I do. Tell him that."

"Tell him thysen."

"Ay, I will."

Then he left the room with an air of injury that for a few moments half imposed upon Martha. She had to have a conversation with her own conscience before she felt quite at ease again about her position. Siding with a son who was inclined to set himself up against the wishes of his father was no light thing in her eyes, and only to be justified by circumstances indisputably warranting such opposition.

She thought such circumstances existed, and whether her judgment was right or wrong, she was, at least, actuated by the most sincere regard for the highest interests of her nephew. Her affection for him was almost maternal in character, for since the death of his mother, in his third year, she had been a mother to him. She loved him wisely and well, and beyond this tie there was a sisterly bond that neither the changes of life nor the great change of death had been able to weaken. Joe was not only Joe, he was also "Sister Ann's dear bairn." And Sister Ann was a memory to Martha, hold-

ing all other memories of their short, happy youth together.

After Amos had left her in such high dudgeon she sat very still, remembering. Her knitting dropped from her hands, her eyes looked far beyond the dreary village, straggling up to the park-gates. She saw the old rectory among the low, curving hills. She was with her sister in its pleasant rooms and garden. She heard her voice filling the dim spaces of the ancient church with the joyful Sabbath psalms. She clasped her hand over their father's grave. She recalled all their struggles and privations together, until Ann married Amos Braithwaite. What for? She would not ask herself the question. She believed fully in the purity and kindness of Ann's motives; and if her good intentions did not turn out well, Ann was not to be blamed for the failure; for alas! mistakes are punished in this life quite irrespective of good intentions.

The marriage had not been a happy one; and after the birth of her child, Ann never rallied. She was ill for three years, and then she went quietly away one night, when all the household were asleep. Amos was relieved by her depar-

ture. He had outlived his fancy for the frail beauty, and the expense and trouble of her long sickness had been a great trial to him. Yet, after it was over, he forgave the poor woman fully, in consideration of, "t' fine little lad she hed left him."

On this child all his hopes settled themselves. It was his ambition to make money, and to buy land, and to call the land after his own name. Therefore, a son to carry on his name was of the first importance to his project. Martha thought of all these things, but she did not think of them as Amos did. She looked on Joe as an individual soul, and not as a link in a family chain. She did not believe his welfare ought to be sacrificed either for the plans of his father or the good of a posterity as yet mythical and uncertain.

She had made some solemn promises to her sister regarding the boy, and she meant to fulfil them if it were possible for her to do so. "But there are so many ifs in all human calculations," she thought; "and we are ready enough to pick out t' varry worst we can find. Deary me! Human hearts are just nests o' fear. They are that!"

Then she rose and put away her knitting, and going to the window looked down at the great mill in the valley. Excepting for its water privileges, and its nearness to the chief wool markets the situation of Market Bevin was not desirable. No scenery in England could be sadder or wilder than the bleak range of hills girdling it on two sides, bare hills partitioned into fields by leagues of stone walls, here and there a dreary village where quarrymen lived, here and there a desolate mansion standing forlornly in the midst of fields that were not green or pleasant looking.

Bevin Hall, the residence of Amos Braithwaite, was a much finer place than the situation warranted. It had been built centuries before mills had been dreamt of. Then the lonely mansions had been the homes of country squires, and the whole valley a secluded agricultural locality. When the spinners began to build mills on the banks of the stream, and the quarrymen to break up the hill sides, then the Bevins abandoned their old home, and Amos bought the place at what he considered "a varry low figure."

He did not dislike the sight of the smoking

mill. He thought, when the hundreds of windows in its five stories were all alight, it was a really grand piece of architecture. It did not trouble him that the agricultural inhabitants, with their simple, old-fashioned manners and customs, were obliged to make way for the vivacious, alert, arrogant mill hands. He rather liked matching his own tongue and his own arrogance against theirs. He had been an operative, he knew all the resentment of labor, and he often told himself "that there wasn't varry much they could say, or do, he wasn't up to."

But the restless, disputatious life did not seem to Martha Thrale a good life. She knew how often Amos and his hands were in open and very vigorously expressed dissent. She knew that their good will was merely a cessation of hostilities, and when Joe expressed his dislike to the mill work, and to the mill itself, with its stony yard, its black dust, its sulphury clouds of smoke, its inky water, its loathsome smells of heated oil, soap-suds, and cesspools, Martha was in sympathy with him, and thought his reluctance a very reasonable one.

How Joe's own desires were to be gratified she hardly knew; and her thoughts at this

hour brought her no nearer the solving of the question than they had done many a time before. But there was at least no great hurry. Amos had talked in the same way for years. There was nothing special in his attitude. She did not reflect that as a rule the great events of life dawn with no more note of preparation than the sun rises.

CHAPTER II.

JOE.

Grief seldom joined with blooming youth is seen;
Can sorrow be, where knowledge scarce has been?

—ROWE.

The world's a wood in which all lose their way,
Though by a different path each goes astray.
The world's a labyrinth, where unguided men
Walk up and down to find their weariness;
No sooner have they measured with much toil
One crooked path, in hope to gain their freedom,
But it betrays them to a new affliction."

—BEAUMONT.

JOE BRAITHWAITE was a very handsome young fellow, one of those fresh, blonde Englishmen whose magnificent physique and perfect health are a promissory note for any amount of probable success. His figure was tall and spare, his aspect strikingly winning and manly, and a quick, undaunted spirit looked out of his clear blue eyes.

With a slightly poetic temperament, he inherited also from his mother a love of elegant surroundings and a disposition to take life pleasantly. But such tastes were not dominant; the gay, pleasure-loving young man had in him the stuff of which heroes are made, indifference to pain, perfect self-reliance, indefatigable perseverance, and a simple resolution, which, when it was called into action, would march straight forward through fire and water to its goal.

He had been to various schools, and under various teachers learned many things whose very names suggested nothing to the unlettered Amos. Indeed, the father had rather tolerated than acquiesced in some of his son's studies; and, perhaps with good reason, he declared that, as regarded Joe's bringing up, "he had been bamboozled by a parcel o' women and schoolmasters." And yet, when Joe quoted Pliny or Aristotle with an air of "that settles the question," or rolled out a couplet of musical, though very likely imperfect Greek, as an illustration, the old man had a certain sense of pride in his clever son, although, feeling himself to be in a dark and unknown territory, he answered

only with a doubtful and contemptuous "Humph!"

In Joe's earliest childhood, the practical father had given strict orders regarding "fairy tales, and giants, and suchlike lies and nonsense." But to say that his aunt and nurse constantly and strictly disobeyed these orders, is only to say that they were women. And one Sunday night, when Joe was seven years old, he had been so completely dumfounded and routed upon this very subject that it was not at all remarkable he should prefer avoiding, for the future, any allusion to personages so far out of his experience and knowledge.

It was a wet Sunday evening in spring; too wet to walk over his park and gardens, very much too wet to permit Martha Thrale and Joe the use of the fine carriage-horses to carry them to the Wesleyan chapel a mile away. He had slept all he could; his ledger was at the mill; another meal was out of the question for a couple of hours: so he bethought himself of little Joe as a means of passing the tedious time.

He found the boy at his aunt's side. She was reading to him, and Joe's bright, hand-

some face expressed nothing but delight and wonder. Amos listened also for a few minutes. It was a marvellous story of the killing of a giant by a little lad with a sling and a stone. In the father's opinion it was an altogether improbable affray; and he speedily interrupted it, saying, with an angry decision, "Hev done, Martha! Hev done wi' such nonsense! Of all t' lies that iver were invented, that one is a topper, I sud say."

"I'd know what I was talking about, if I was thee, Amos Braithwaite. I reckon to do my duty by t' little lad, and I'm only teaching him his Bible lesson."

Then she quietly opened the Holy Book and placed before the disconcerted father the objectionable history. He was troubled and annoyed by the circumstance. Before this untoward confirmation of his opinions, he had had an impression that the Bible was a book only suitable for chapels and churches and the Sabbath day; and after it, he was more than ever convinced that there was more radical incompatibility between it and the big book which lay upon the high desk in the counting-room of Bevin Mill.

When Joe began to go to school, Amos soon found out that a self-made man is not at all points a match for a self-willed boy. His positive instructions to the schoolmaster had been, "Solid reading, writing, arithmetic and chemistry. None o' your rubbishy Latin and Greek and poetry." But the school was not in any measure dependent upon Amos Braithwaite. It had a noble foundation, and the master did not think it necessary to vary the prescribed routine to meet the taste of one patron. So Joe's inclinations towards poetry and literature were fully encouraged, and he took some prizes in the very studies which his father had forbidden.

But this was almost a venial offence compared with the audacity of Joe's latest proposition, to bring a Frenchman into the very parlors of Bevin Hall, in order that he might learn to speak a language which Amos declared "nobody could mak' a word o' sense of," and which he always associated with every thing that was immoral and extravagant, with foppery and atheism and anarchy.

And now that Martha Thrale had actually set herself against him, he felt that a crisis had

come in the relationship between himself and his son. It was just as well, he thought; things long undecided would now be brought to a settlement. And Amos was glad of it; for, though he expected trouble and opposition, he was prepared to meet it with all the stubborn will of a strong but narrow mind.

He was very fond of Joe, and, in an unacknowledged way, very proud of him. Though he would not have admitted it, he was also vain of the young man's beauty and stylish air; and whenever Joe strolled into his presence with his thoroughly-at-ease, satisfied manner, Amos always looked at him with a curious mixture of admiration and disapproval.

Hitherto there had been no serious disagreement between them, for Joe had shown no very decided symptoms of rebellion. There had certainly been one prolonged dispute about his desire to go to Cambridge, and another equally positive when he requested permission to travel for two years; but Amos had put his foot firmly down on both requests, and that had been the end of them. Joe had given in before, and the self-confident father did not think he

would make any firmer stand about any other disputed question.

Still, as he now meant to make his son a proposal which was to decide all the future between them, he was unusually nervous about it, especially as he perceived that he would have no support from Martha Thrale. He delayed it from day to day with a vacillation foreign to his character and humiliating to his self-esteem.

One fine spring evening, as they sat at dinner before the open windows, the moment of decision arrived. Neither had expected nor in any special way provided for it at that hour. It arose out of a circumstance and from a remark which seemed irrelevant. Martha Thrale was called from the table by some unusual domestic event, and Joe's first remark related to a pleasure tour which a friend of his had in contemplation.

"For sure," answered Amos, "young Warps is varry rich, and he can afford to fling his brass and his time away among foreigners, if he has no more sense than to do so. If a man reckons to spend his life in pleasuring and laking, he had best do it while he's young, for he won't

get much out o' such ways when he's old. So I don't say Warps is wrong if that is what he is after. But there's better jobs for a man to do: there's good work, and makin' something of t' gifts one hes for getting hold o' a bit of money—"

"But you would make life a drama in two acts, father, working and sleeping."

"I don't know what ta means by makin' life a drama. I'd niver do it. I sud think it would lead one into all sorts o' bother. Young Warps, and owd Warps, too, look over us a bit, I fancy; but we can put as much brass down as any of them, I dare say; ay, Joe, as any of them."

"Young Warps is a very good sort, I think."

"T' owd man couldn't see me yesterday; no, not even with t' help o' his eye-glasses. He looked as if he owned both sides of t' street."

"They have had more than a little trouble with their hands lately."

"Serve them right, too. They hev allays got some fad on hand about 'lifting them up,' and makin' gentlemen and ladies of born hands. When a cup is made o' common pottery you can't turn it into fine Darby china; and it'll tak' a cleverer man than owd Warps to mak'

gentlemen o' his hands by persuading them to read t' poets."

"He subscribed £500 to the new reading-room."

"Does ta think, Joe, I hevn't heard tell o' that? Owd Warps likes to show himsen his better side out, and that is why he gave £500; but when all is reckoned up, he'll mebbe not hev given as much as other folk. I gave £100, but best givers are them as hev to pinch themsens a bit to spare aught; and what wi' buying wool, and paying wages, I hedn't a £500 to spare; I hedn't that. Keep your sitting, Joe." Then he pushed the wine across the table, and said, "Tak' a glass with me, my lad. I am going to mak' thee a fine offer, and we'll drink to it."

Joe looked steadily at his father, and then slowly filled his glass. There were a few moments of strained silence, then he asked,

"What is it, father?"

"I wer' thinking that thou must hev hed enough of learning by this time, and that happen thou would like to frame thysen to business."

"I am not likely ever to have enough of learning, father. But I do think that I ought

to be doing something like work. Why! I am nearly twenty-two years old."

"To be sure thou art! Varry well, then, when will ta come to t' mill? There's a deal for thee to get at thy finger-ends, for I'd like thee to know t' business from A to Z."

"I was not thinking of the mill, father."

"Oh! Thou wasn't thinking of t' mill. What was ta thinking of, then?"

"I was thinking of the law."

"Thou was thinking of the law, was ta? Think away, my lad. But for a' thy thinking thou art bound to take thy part in Market-Bevin Mill."

"I am not yet bound to any thing — or to any one, for that matter. I have made up my mind to be a lawyer. I hate the sight of the looms, and the men in their blue pinafores, and the slatternly, down-at-heel women. I must do some better work than that."

"I hope ta may! — I hope to goodness thou may! But I don't think thou will iver do as good work as I hev done. Come, Joe; come, my lad! Do thy duty by t' business, and we will varry soon hev t' biggest mill and the highest chimney i' Wharfdale."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, father."

"Why-a! I hev been thinking o' takin' thee into t' mill iver since I laid the first stone of it, Joe. I hev thought for thee and worked for thee iver since thou wert born. Thou *must* go to t' mill, or it will be t' worse for thee. Mind that, my lad; for I am in downright earnest."

"So am I, sir."

The threat had decided Joe. The proposal had found him in a contradictious, self-willed temper, and the half menace was just the thing he would not stand. In the moment, without thought, without any real inclination, he had said he would be a lawyer, and now he was determined to stand to the statement, whatever the result might be.

Both men became steadily more and more positive and angry. Amos had risen and taken his favorite position on the hearth-rug. Joe, reclining in a large chair, picked his teeth, and looked quite away from his irate father. One would have supposed that all his interests were connected with the lilacs and laburnums blowing at the open window.

"I sall make thee one more offer," said

Amos, at length; "if thou refuses it I sall niver, niver more consider thee to hev part or lot in my mill. Next Monday come to t' mill. I'll give thee £500 a year, and if all is as it should be, at the end of three years I'll give thee a sixth interest. Then thou can marry and make a man o' thysen."

"You intend to be very good to me, father."

"I do that, Joe. Think well, my lad, afore thou speaks. Thou knows well that I'll niver go back on any word I say."

"If I feel obliged to refuse your offer, father, then—"

"Then, I will give thee £5,000. Thou can mak' or mar with it, as suits thy fancy. That is a' I have to say."

"I will take the £5,000, father."

"Thou sall hev it to-morrow morning. Don't 'ee think that I sall iver ask thee again."

"Dear father!"

"Nay-a, nay-a! Thou needn't dear me now. Yes, father, would have been more son-like, and more to the purpose. I hev been a bit soft about thee, but I can mend that—I can mend that."

"Every man has a right, father, to choose his own life-work."

"Nowt of t' sort! Them as does it mostly mak's a pretty mess o' their life-work. Thy work is ready at thy hands. It is flying in t' face of Providence to think thou can lay any better out for thysen."

"A man finds out things by experience—by trying."

"If ta likes that way, tak' it. But remember this: if ta thinks of heving thy awn way, until ivery thing is at sixes and sevens wi' thee, and then thinks thou can turn round and tak' my way, thou will find thysen a bit mistaken."

"I shall never ask you for any thing but what you choose to give me, father."

"I told thee I would give thee £5,000. Thou can do whativer ta likes with it."

"I shall enter myself to read with Perkins."

"Do as ta likes; do as ta likes. What ta does will be naught to me."

Then Amos threw his red bandanna handkerchief over his head, settled himself in his chair, and in a few minutes seemed to be asleep. But sleep was far from him. Tears come as hard as blood from some men, and Amos was

of this class. Yet great, bitter tears rolled slowly down his rugged face that evening, tears which the bandanna hid, but which no human hand could wipe away. Never before in all his struggling, successful life had he felt such sharp sorrow, such keen disappointment. For he had not realized until that hour how dear his son was to him, how inextricably bound up in all his hopes and happiness.

And he had said words he never could unsay. Indeed, the possibility of unsaying them never presented itself to him. It might kill him to "stick up" to the threat he had made; all the same, he knew that he should stand to every letter of it. And he expected nothing less from Joe. He would almost have despised him if he had returned and asked to be allowed to accept his offer. To back out of a position once taken is a thing few Yorkshiremen can contemplate, and both father and son understood that the few positive words said that night had separated their paths forever.

Joe went at once to his aunt, and told her of his interview and its result. She did not fully sympathize with him.

"Thou hes been in too big a hurry, Joe,"

she said. "If thou hed taken a more round-about road to thy awn way, thou would hev gotten it all the sooner, lad, thou would that. Now, then, thou hes flung away about half a million o' money, what is ta going to do with thy £5,000? Thou, that hes hed every thing to come and tak' from."

"I never had more than £300 a year."

"Hey! but thou counts things varry carelessly. Thou hed £300 a year for pocket-money, Joe, only for pocket money. Thou wilt hev to find thy awn bed and board now. Thou wilt hev to pay thy own tailor's bills, and many another bill beside. And thou knows well, Joe, that I hevn't t' ways and t' means to help thee much."

Joe was fond of luxuries, and this view of the question had not presented itself before. Yet it was evident he would have to leave his father's house. He would have to take upon himself the cares of life and living. The thought sobered him considerably. He wished in his heart that he had not been so ready to fling away half a million of money; but he kept his lips tightly drawn for fear he should give utterance to the regretful thought.

As he sat half-stupefied by this sudden change in his fortunes, he looked gloomily round his handsome rooms, and wondered how much it would cost to rent others in any way approaching them in comfort. Then he took a piece of paper, and jotted down the outstanding bills in his name, and they made a total which compelled him to realize the amount of his expenditure as he had never done before. Even taking into account the natural hopefulness of youth, it must be admitted that Joe Braithwaite did not spend a much happier night than his father did.

CHAPTER III.

A GREAT CHANGE.

Whose fortune is not fitted to his will,
Too great or little, is uneasy still.

Fortune is a goddess only to fools; the wise are always masters of their own.

—DRYDEN.

The noisy markets of the law,
The camp of gowned war.

—COWLEY.

AMOS and his son met in the morning with more ceremony than Joe intended or desired. In fact, there was both sorrow and some thoughts of surrender in his heart when he said, "Good-morning, father."

"Good-morning, sir. Take a cup o' coffee, and then we will finish that bit o' business we began last night."

The cool, civil greeting hurt Joe far worse than either angry reproaches or angry silence could have done. Not once during the meal

did he utter the young man's familiar name. It was no longer Joe, and the substitution of the word sir was too marked to escape notice. It was a very wretched meal, and soon over. Then Amos took a cheque from his pocket, and laying it down by Joe's side, said, "Tak' that bit o' paper to Thornton. He'll give thee its value in Bank o' England notes."

"Thank you, father."

"Eh! but thou would hev been welcomer to a hundred times as much if ta would nobbut hev stood by my side while I wer' living, and in my shoes when I wer' dead. But when a bird hes found out as one nest won't do for it, happen it's right to mak' itsen another. Good-bye, sir."

"Father! Don't leave me in that way."

"Dal it, lad! T' way is good enough for t' occasion. Ingratitude and disobedience seem to be rooted in children, and what is bred in them is none easy to get out. Well, well, things being as they are, I may as well tak' to them at once."

Martha Thrale had not appeared at the breakfast table. She had a sharp tongue, and was ready to use it, and she feared to make bad

worse by some inappropriate remark, which would irritate her brother-in-law and call forth Joe's championship. She hoped, if left to themselves, some compromise would be arrived at, or, at least, that the parting might be made with a more kindly and hopeful tone for the future.

And with that pitiful instinct of womanhood which has learned to appeal to a man's lower sensibilities, she had prepared with care the breakfast dishes Amos particularly liked, had seen that the room wore its pleasantest aspect, and that every trifling circumstance should be conducive to a mood of satisfaction.

Amos took no note of any of these small attentions. Had one of them been neglected, he would probably have called the whole house to task for the omission; but the comforts ready to his hand he seemed to be unconscious of. And Joe was too anxious to notice any thing beyond his father's stubborn coldness and his aunt's absence. There was also a feeling in his heart that this was the last meal he would ever eat in Bevin Hall, and that it was a very unhappy one.

Amos left the table first. He took off his

slippers, tossed them across the hearthrug, and laced his mill boots with trembling but deliberate hands. He had no more to say to Joe; and he seemed to feel his presence an annoyance. It was not difficult for Joe to be aware of this sentiment, and the young man said, "I am only waiting for Aunt Martha, father. I will not trouble you any longer than is necessary."

"That is as it sud be. When two can't hit on, why, then, t' sooner they part t' better for t' both o' them."

Then he lifted his head, stamped his feet well down into his boots, and taking the morning paper from the table, turned to leave the room. Joe intercepted him, and said, "Shake hands, father, at any rate."

But he turned his back squarely on Joe's offered hand. He would not see the tears in his son's eyes or the anxiety on his face. He hurried out of the room and the house, and spoke to the waiting coachman in a voice that made the man wonder what was coming next.

Martha understood his manner only too well. She perceived at once that her little plans and hopes were a failure. As soon as Amos was clear of the house she went to her nephew,

though she was not pleased with him for the hurry and decision of the attitude he had taken. Why had he not waited a little, compromised a little, given up a little, as a son should have done to a good father?

But she was determined to stand by Joe—right or wrong, she meant to stand by him. Her love for the lad, and her promise to her sister, included all the devotion she understood by "standing with" any person or principle. And Joe very soon made her see things very much as he saw them. She looked into the young fellow's handsome face and tearful eyes, and "wondered however his father could bide to turn his back on such a son." She thought his refusal to shake hands with Joe "a shameful bit o' pride and hard-hearted cruelty." She came very speedily to the opinion that "Amos had no right to offer up his son's life, as well as his own, to the welfare of Bevin Mill, a big, smoking monster as it is!" She added, angrily, "Wife and child might feed t' fires that keep it going rather than he'd see it stop. Joe, my lad, thou art right in t' main, and I'll stand up for thee through thick and thin. Whatever is ta going to do now?"

"I shall take some rooms in Market-Bevin, and read law with Perkins."

"Varry good, if Perkins will have thee."

"No fear of that, Aunt Martha. I shall have a good bit of money to pay him, no doubt; but I should have to pay a stranger the same. I am none fond of strangers."

"Thou might happen find thysen better off among strangers."

"Market-Bevin is my native town. I won't let father think he can turn me out of it as well as out of his own house."

"Thy father is a big man in Market-Bevin. Thou won't find it easy to live there if he sets himself against it."

"Why should he? Studying law with Perkins is not a crime, I hope."

"Mebbe not; go and see Perkins. I think he'll open thy eyes a bit. And then, if ta wants rooms, go to Ann Guiseley's; she hes some to rent, and she'll cook thy victuals as they sud be cooked, for I taught her mysen."

"When will you come and see me?"

"I'll hev a talk wi' thy father when he comes from t' mill to-night; and I'll let thee know all about it as quick as iver I can."

"Then I will go and talk with Perkins at once; for I could see that father does not want me here any longer. And this afternoon I will remove my clothes and books and such trifles as are really mine."

It might be thought that a young man among life-long friends, and with £5,000 in his pockets, would find an open door into life. But Joe's first experience was not a flattering one. Perkins was in when he called, but he kept Joe waiting in his outer office until every particle of his enthusiasm and self-reliance seemed to have evaporated.

And when he heard of the quarrel between father and son he became very cold and cautious. It was by no means to his advantage to put himself in opposition to Amos. The master of Bevin Mill was of an extremely litigious temper, and had for many years been the source of a considerable yearly income to Perkins, and was likely to continue to be so. The whole of Joe's £5,000 would not have bribed him to find a vacancy in his office. He even turned mentor, deprecated the step Joe had taken, and advised him, as a friend, to go back to his father and make his peace with him.

"He is a bit masterful, ivery body knows that, Joe," said Perkins, with a smile he meant to be conciliatory; "but if two men ride t' same horse, one must ride behind; and that is thy place, Joe."

"Unless I ride my own horse."

"For sure! Only, thou will need a varry strong nag to carry thee where ta wants to go. Put up wi' thy father a bit, lad. He hes gotten that used to telling folk they must do this, and they mustn't do that, that he thinks t' varry stars sud do as he bids 'em."

"But, Perkins, I am a man now—I have a right to my own opinions."

"A pity on thee, Joe! If ta can't learn to smile as t' wind smiles, thou wilt varry soon take cold, ay, varry soon take cold. Well, a good-morning to thee. I'm particular busy at present."

Thus Joe got his first rebuff from a stranger. He felt it hard to bear. Angry and humiliated, he talked over the interview with Aunt Martha in no reasonable mood, and as Perkins was also one of her aversions she gave Joe perhaps an unwise amount of sympathy.

Besides, it nearly broke her heart to see him

packing his trunks, "turned out o' house and home just because he couldn't frame himsen to give his life to t' mill." And when Joe had really gone away, when his room was left desolate and dismantled, she sat down in it, and wept bitterly.

"I'll niver stop here any longer," she muttered. "T' light of t' house hes been put out. It hes been slave and save, and worry and fret and bide his tempers, and do his bidding for twenty-four years. That is about long enough for any woman to put up wi' him. I promised Ann that I would stick by Joe, and I am going to stick by Joe. I'll not hear a word wrong of Joe from anybody; and Amos will find that out sooner than he thinks for."

All day long her fits of crying were interrupted by such communions and conversations with herself. Amos never suspected such a state of feeling. On the contrary, he was certain that he would at least have Martha Thrale's sympathy; for he knew that she had always been opposed to any plan which would take Joe permanently from under her care.

So he was glad when the day was over. It

had been, perhaps, one of the most wretched in his whole life. Among the clatter and clash of a thousand looms he had not been able to forget his sorrow, even though the hands had given him unusual opportunities of relieving his irritation. But the weariest day comes to a close, and he stood, at last, outside the mill gates, holding the big keys in his hand, and vacantly watching the groups of chattering lads and lasses strolling over the moor to their homes.

A strange reluctance to go to his own home was in his heart. He had no need to inquire of it. He knew that he dreaded the lonely dinner-table ; for Martha Thrale, in the way of men's talk, he counted as nobody. He had always conversed with Joe about politics, about the local spinners and manufacturers, their ways and doings, their trade and their solvency, their gains and losses. He did not call it gossip, but it was the talk in which he delighted ; for he considered that other people's business might have a good deal to do with his own.

Several things had happened that day which, in the usual course of events, he would have enjoyed discussing with Joe. Then he recog-

nized with fresh anger that not only in the mill, but also in his home pleasures, Joe's disobedience was a grievous curtailment of his life. So when he saw Martha's red and swollen eyes he had a moment's regret even for her.

"No wonder thou hes been crying, lass," he said; "it's enough to mak' thee cry. After a' thou hes done for him, too! Whativer does ta think of his ways! It caps a' I iver heard tell of!"

She looked up at him with flashing eyes.

"I hev been thinking o' *thy* conduct all day, Amos; and I'm bound to say I think thee a godless, heartless old man as iver was."

"Why-a! Martha!"

"I do. And thou needn't frown at me, for it's true—true as gospel. When did thou iver love aught but gold? Thou let my poor sister die without one word o' love or regret. I sent to t' mill and told thee she wer' dying one day, and thou wert too busy to come. Thou niver did aught to win thy poor boy's confidence and respect, and now, to top ivery thing, thou turns him out into t' streets. Poor lad! Poor Joe!"

"Dost ta think that nobody suffers but thee and Joe? I hev some feelings too, I reckon."

"Not thou! And if ta hes, don't thee come to me for comfort or sympathy. I hev none for thee. Go to thy money bags. Thou hes sacrificed ivery thing for them. And if ta does not repent varry soon, thou wilt die wicked and alone!"

"Martha Thrale, will ta stop? Hes ta lost thy senses, lass?"

"No, I'll not stop till I hev hed my say; thou wilt die, Amos, without a kind hand to close thy greedy old eyes, that hev niver looked up to heaven, nor a bit higher than t' top o' thy mill chimney. That is what I think o' thee, Amos Braithwaite."

"Thou isn't thy own sel' at all, Martha. Thou art sick, my lass."

"I am better ivery way than thou art; and when thou comes to die, thou'lt be forced to leave ivery penny o' thy brass behind thee—ivery penny of it, Amos, and go where money is of no account at all."

"Hev done wi' thee, Martha. Hes ta lost thy senses? Whativer dost ta want?"

"I want thee to do summat to bring back thy only child before it be past thy doing."

"I'll not lift a finger to bring him back. Not I."

"Varry well then, thou wilt hev to tak' t' consequences."

"Ay, I'll tak' them."

"My sister Ann—"

"Let thy sister Ann alone; and mind this! I'll not hev Joe Braithwaite's name spoken in my house by thee nor by any ither body. And I'll marry again if I want to. And I'll hev such friendship as is going these days. If Joe Braithwaite can do without me, I can do without him, varry well, indeed! Why-a! I hev made half a million o' money, or near by it, and I hev made mysen a man."

"For sure thou hes, and a right mean job thou hes made o' thysen. When thou was at it, thou might hev done it a bit better, I think. There is varry little reason to crack up thy cloth, if ta mak's it no better than thou hes made thysen. And what is half-a-million o' money? I'll warrant our Joe will mak' more than that before he is thy age."

"Thou wilt hev to leave my house if ta goes on this-a-way!"

"I am going to leave it. Does ta think I

would stop wi' thee, and poor Joe driven into t' street? If I did, I would be a disgrace to mysen, and to all t' Thrales, living or dead. And thou can pay me my wages this varry hour if ta likes, for I'm fain to get out o' thy house."

"Does ta mean what ta says?"

"Yes, I do that."

"Then get thee ready and go. I hevn't such a thing as a favor to ask of thee."

So that evening, as Joe sat very disconsolately in Ann Guiseley's best parlor, he was joined by Martha Thrale. She came in about eight o'clock, flushed and excited, and still trembling from her unusual interview with Amos. This sudden and violent breaking of the last tie between himself and his father affected Joe very much. He was almost inclined to blame Martha for her want of patience.

"If you had stopped beside him, I should have had some one to say a good word for me," he said, reproachfully.

"Ay, lad; but why, then, didn't thou stop and say thy own good words?"

"What shall I do, Aunt Martha?'

"Here is Ann Guiseley coming wi' a cup o' tea for me, and much I need it; while I drink it I'll tell thee what I think. It's plain that Josiah Perkins does not want thee."

"He is afraid to offend my father; and I daresay that every one in Market-Bevin will feel very much as Perkins does."

"It's more than likely. Well, then, I am going to Leeds. I shall take a house and furnish it, and let such of t' rooms as I don't want. There's Halifax Brothers, lawyers, in Leeds. I reckon as they hev as good a name as old Perkins."

This suggestion pleased Joe very much. It took him out of the immediate neighborhood of his father, and yet was not far enough away from his life centre to give him a feeling of loneliness or remoteness. In all its phases the plan was thoroughly discussed between them that night, for Martha was a woman, not only of rapid thought, but also of rapid action. Within a month she had a very handsome home in Leeds, and Joe had been properly articled to Halifax Brothers, solicitors.

There was no law firm in the West Riding that had a higher reputation in civil cases

requiring a shrewd cleverness just touching something that might be called by a less respectable name. But if Amos Braithwaite had wished his son to be a lawyer, then Halifax Brothers would have been the ideal masters at whose feet he would have desired him to sit.

When he heard from Perkins where Joe had placed himself, he felt a real sentiment of respect for his son.

"It's a move as might hev been expected o' my son," he said. "T' lad is no fool; and if he wants to make his brass by ither folks' cheatry and quarrelling, there's nobody i' Yorkshire that could better teach him to steal by line and level than Tom Halifax can."

CHAPTER IV.

THUS RUNS THE WORLD AWAY.

An unseen hand makes all our moves;
And some are great, and some are small,
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,
One moment can retard an appointed hour.

—COWLEY.

Or, what strange grounds we build our hopes and fears!
Man's life is all a mist, and in the dark
Our fortunes meet us.

—DRYDEN.

IT was true that in his sudden determination to become a lawyer, Joe had pleased Martha as little as he had pleased his father. For if Amos had wished to place his son among the nobles of the Bradford House of Woollen Lords, Martha had had her dreams of seeing her nephew hold forth to admiring thousands from a Wesleyan pulpit.

But Joe, as he grew to manhood, drew away from the chapel, and affected to entirely disapprove of Methodist faith and discipline.

His disagreements with his aunt on this subject had privately given Amos much amusement. He enjoyed this form of Joe's dissent, and was accustomed to say, "Joe, and ivery other lad wi' his common-senses, ought to hev perfect freedom of opinion. *That* was t' varry spirit o' dissent, and if Joe was a dissenter, then he wanted him to know 't' ifs and t' ands,' and 't' ins and t' outs' of t' chapel he went to. He was a Church o' England man himsen, but he hed nowt to say against his son being a dissenter if t' lad liked following his aunt instead o' his father."

So no one could deny that in religious matters Amos was grandly tolerant. It was in business affairs he regarded dissent as an unpardonable offence. Joe's right of private judgment stopped at Bevin Mill. Martha's views were essentially different. She thought Joe's wealth and position gave him splendid opportunities for honoring the cause and the connection she loved. She did not think he was doing right to evade the responsibilities of his birth. But she was quite ready to support him in his refusal to offer up his life to the advancement of Bevin Mill.

Consequently, when he suddenly declared his intention to be a lawyer, Amos and Martha, both alike, suffered a keen disappointment, only Amos allowed it to canker his whole life, without let or hindrance, or future hope, and Martha accepted the inevitable, and tried to make the best of it. For it is characteristic of good women that when they cannot get what they want they try to be pleased with what they can get.

Martha did her best to accept the law and Tom Halifax, though she by no means approved of Tom Halifax. Hitherto she had only known him by report, as a shrewd lawyer, whose legal fencing and clever repartees were the popular after-dinner talk of farmers and business men. But he took that sudden and warm liking for Joe which middle-aged, gay bachelors often take for handsome young men. He was dissatisfied without his society, and eager to initiate him into all his own pleasures.

And the son of old Amos Braithwaite easily made himself popular and welcome, especially with mothers who had large families of pretty, marriageable daughters. He was fine-looking

and agreeable, the probable heir of half-a-million of money, the favorite and friend of the pet lawyer of the locality. It was likely enough he would become a partner in the firm of Halifax Brothers, and most of the women believed that he would very speedily regain his father's love. The men, however, or at least such of them as knew Amos Braithwaite, were less sanguine.

"He'll do nowt o' t' sort," said Ezra Deaconson to his wife as she was speaking of Joe's attentions to her own pretty Mattie. "He'll do nowt o' t' sort. Thou doesn't know Amos Braithwaite, or thou would never say it. I hevn't seen him mysen for years and years, but I can reckon him up pretty well. If he has turned his back on his son, there's nothing but t' almighty hand o' God could mak' Amos face about."

"I don't think that bad of him, Ezra. I hev spoke with them as knows Braithwaite varry well, and I hev heard 'em say, thet if you can only get on t' right side of him, you'll find a kind heart below his stubborn will and gruff speech."

"What by that, Martha? What by that?

Did ta iver hear tell of any one who did get on t' right side o' him? I'll warrant thou hesn't. Thou keep our Mattie away from Joe Braithwaite; t' little lass will hev too much brass for that young man to handle."

"Deary me, Ezra! Brass seems to come into ivery thought, sweethearting and all. It is a wonderful thing!"

"Ay, it is; when a man knows how to use it."

"Tom Halifax was saying that there is talk of Amos Braithwaite marrying a young woman, and going in for a bit o' pleasure in his old days."

"Amos is none such a fool. Amos knows well enough he'd hev no pleasure outside his mill. Without t' looms he'd be about as miserable as a gambler would be without his cards. I did hear summat about Lottie Greenwood and Amos, but I set little by wedding talk, till I see t' wedding. Wherever womenfolk are concerned hearsay don't do for me; I wouldn't swear even to my awn eyesight."

The report, however, which coupled the names of Amos Braithwaite and Lottie Greenwood was not without foundation. He had

said he would marry again, and have such friendship as was going. In the first smart of his desertion, it seemed to him the surest way to show Joe that he had cast him off forever, and also to insure such domestic comfort as he wanted.

Now, if he had been looking for wool, he would have known exactly where to go for the quality he desired; but he felt like a man in a strange world when he wanted a wife. It happened, however, that he had one day an occasion to call on Jonathan Greenwood about some special hands, and as they sat talking Lottie came into the room. She was fresh and rosy from the breezy walk upon the moor, and her bright black eyes, and fine color, and buxom form attracted Amos.

He stayed to tea and played a game of whist afterwards, and Lottie was his partner. When he went home he was considerably under the fascination of her bright eyes, and he kept saying to himself, "There will be no fear of a girl like that turning sick on my hands, and mebbe I might hev a bit o' house-comfort wi' her, if I could only frame mysen to marry again."

For a month things progressed very favora-

bly. He had not asked Lottie to be his wife, but he was on the way to do so one night when he met an old acquaintance on the road. He offered him a seat in his gig, and they fell into conversation. Amos himself introduced the subject of the Greenwoods, and the man, who really knew nothing of his intention, went backward in his own memory to find a reason for his evident desire to talk about them. Then he remembered that Joe Braithwaite had once been an admirer of Lottie, and he said, "Happen thou art trying to put things right again between thy Joe and Greenwood's pretty lass?"

Amos looked sharply at the questioner, but it was evident the remark had been made in good faith, so he replied, with well-assumed indifference, "Not I. I niver bothered mysen wi' Joe's love affairs; I'd hev had a lot to do if I'd tried thet job. So Joe were sweet on Lottie Greenwood? I niver heard tell o' that."

"Joe's hed lots o' sweethearts."

"I dare be bound he had; but I niver heard o' Greenwood's daughter before."

"Oh, but you know, they wer' varry thick once on a time. Folks thought they would marry, but they didn't."

"No, they didn't. Thet's so. Mebbe t' lass wasn't fond o' Joe. Mebbe she jilted him. Girls hev jilted finer fellows than Joe Braithwaite, I'll warrant."

"It wer' Joe's fault, I reckon. Lottie Greenwood was uncommon fond o' him, I heard. And t' old folks wer' varry set up with t' idea. They had parties and stirrings on a grand scale for them. That showed how fain for t' match they wer'; for they are a scraping, careful pair, aren't they?"

"I fancy they are. But a love for brass is common enough. I'd like a bit more mysen. If ta will step down now I'll bid thee good-night, for I'm bound for Greenwoods, and I'm obliged to thee for telling me about my Joe and Lottie. I shall look a bit closer at her to-night. Why! she might hev been my daughter?" And Amos laughed loudly, and whipped up his mare like a man in a great hurry.

And the acquaintance whom he dropped laughed too. "Old Cobwebs knows a' about wool," he muttered; "but if he goes to bothering wi' women, he will find out varry quick what an ignoramus he is."

Amos had already begun to suspect it. He

was congratulating himself for offering Hartley a ride, when he entered Lottie's presence. She happened to be quieter than usual, a little sad and sentimental. It was a mood Amos could not understand, and which had not pleasant associations. Besides, it instantly struck him that Lottie was perhaps fretting a little for Joe. The thought made it very easy for him to speak.

"Lottie," he said, "did ta iver know Joe Braithwaite?"

"Yes, I knew him. He used to call here often, once."

"Was he in love wi' thee?"

"Perhaps he was."

"Was ta in love with him?"

"You shouldn't ask such questions."

"Ay, but I should," he was looking steadily at her. "Thou quarreled wi' Joe, didn't ta?"

"I think Joe behaved badly."

"I hev no doubt he did. It comes easy for Joe to behave badly. And thou wanted to be even with him, didn't ta? If ta married me, thou could pay him back, couldn't ta?"

"Joe is a bad son. Joe is true to nobody."

"Ay, he is a bad son. I told him I'd marry again, and I hed some thoughts o' asking thee to be my wife."

Lottie looked up, and then down, with a most encouraging smile.

"But I hev changed my mind since I heard tell o' Joe. I don't want any cast-off sweetheart of Joe's. So we'll be off wi' that bargain. There are plenty o' matrimonial failures, without us makin' another on t' black list, I'm sure."

Naturally Lottie was at once indignant. She told Amos very decidedly that she had never had the slightest intention of marrying him. And Amos was delighted to have her look at the situation in that light. It put the blame of the rupture just where it suited him to have it. For, though he expected men to twit him about wearing the willow, etc., he knew that he could bear that accusation far more comfortably than a legal inquiry, which might cost him golden guineas to heal the hurt his fickleness had given Miss Lottie.

This was the only experiment Amos made looking toward domestic or social happiness. He congratulated himself that it had been a

failure, and henceforward he determined to seek neither the friendship of men nor the love of women. He virtually closed his house, for he confined himself to the parlor in which he ate and the room in which he slept. And he dismissed all his servants, excepting the old woman who cooked his food, and her husband, who attended to his horse and gig, and pottered about the garden at odd hours.

Then he devoted himself, body and soul, to the mill which Joe had despised. He built wings to it, and added a story, and lengthened the chimney until it overtopped all the chimneys far and near. He filled it with the finest machinery. He employed only the most competent hands. He utilized every drop of water and every ounce of steam so cleverly that people said, "If there were only the power of a blue-bottle fly owd Braithwaite would turn it to account." He was always busy and active and apparently so cheerful that no one suspected him to be at heart an unhappy and bitterly disappointed man.

In the meantime, Joe was taking his existence with a large measure of content. Aunt

Martha watched over his comfort with that priceless common-place love which does not disdain the oversight of very inferior details, which can superintend meals and oversee stockings and buttons, and is not to be frittered away by continual small demands on forbearance and sympathy. For in scarcely any respect did Joe fulfil Martha Thrale's personal hopes and desires. He turned out to be a society man instead of a chapel man. He went to balls and parties, he dressed elegantly, and visited in the grandest houses. He was a kind of leader in a very fashionable set. And of course £5,000 could not last for ever, even when a man is nowise troubled about board and lodging bills. So, at the end of four years' dressing and visiting and driving, Joe's credit was no longer represented by four figures, for he had dipped deeply into his last thousand. However, he was then ready to go into business, and he felt sure that the large circle of friends he had made would repay the expense of making them. He furnished a handsome office and announced himself to the public as Attorney-at-law. But Yorkshiremen are proverbially cautious, and a handsome,

good-natured, fashionably-dressed young man was the very antipodes of their ideal lawyer. Joe could not look crafty or wise under any circumstances, and during the first year of his professional life he did not make sufficient money to pay his office rent.

Nevertheless Joe did not in any way think of curtailing his expenses. When the summer holidays arrived, he went as usual to a favorite watering-place. He admitted to himself that it might be the last summer he could afford the luxury, and he determined to make the most of his pleasure. No face was so bright, no heart so gay, no one so entertaining and so popular.

In the height of the season there was a report that stirred the heart of every young man in Harrowgate; Miss Edith Bradley was coming. She was said to be beautiful, she was known to be immensely wealthy. She was only twenty-two years old, and therefore not past the age in which women are apt to think the world well lost for love.

Joe had heard before of Miss Bradley; not so much of Miss Bradley as of her father. Old Luke Bradley had been always a Mordecai to

his own father. There had been a deep and long-cherished grudge between the two men. Both of them had loved Ann Thrale, and Amos had won her. After her decease, Luke had spoken warmly concerning the indifference of Amos to her comfort while she was living, and to her memory when she was dead. He had emphasized his opinions by many well-directed interferences with the business of Bevin Mill. He had bid wool up when Amos wished to buy. He had bought off hands Amos wished to retain. He had dropped words and looks before probable customers which had doubtless lost Amos many a sovereign. He had run against him for local offices, and always defeated him; in short, he had been a stumbling block and an offense in every business plan, and in every social ambition which Amos had conceived.

Joe remembered well the reticent satisfaction which the news of his death had given at Bevin Hall. Amos had not, at that hour, spoken a word expressive of his feelings; but all the same he had not been able to hide his sentiments. He might just as well have said then, what he said a few days afterward: "He'll hev to abate himsen a bit now. He'll find out thet

Luke Bradley can't order things as he fancies 'em, for wherever he is, there's sure to be bigger folk than he iver was. My word! How he used to jingle t' guineas in his breeches pocket, and then step out to t' music they made."

Joe remembered all these things. He had felt thoroughly in sympathy with his father's sense of injury from Luke Bradley, yet he had a vague curiosity to see this daughter of their enemy. The feeling was perhaps something more than a curiosity; it included a dim and depressing presentiment about her, a consciousness which was stronger than his curiosity, and which found a tangible expression in a reluctance to meet her.

And yet, unless he left Harrowgate, a meeting was inevitable. The question soon resolved itself into two points, neither of which he had any desire to face. First, if he liked Edith Bradley, he would feel like a traitor to the past, and to his father, and he would most likely cast away the last chance of a reconciliation with him. Second, if he did not like her, it was probable the feeling would be mutual, in which case Edith might say and do little

things which would make his longer stay an unpleasant, perhaps a mortifying ordeal.

So he resolved to shorten his holiday. He was nearly out of funds, and it was evident his affairs were reaching a crisis. He took a quiet stroll in the gardens to consider his future course, and as he wandered thoughtfully under the trees he saw two ladies sitting in a little alcove in advance of him. One of them he knew was Lilian Gates; he recognized her short, slight figure and shrill laugh; the other was Edith Bradley.

He knew it, though he could not have given a single reason for knowing it. Retreat was not possible, for the ladies must have seen him. He dreaded Lilian's witty explanation of his position. He would not have Edith Bradley think he was afraid to meet her. So he advanced slowly, bearing with a studied nonchalance their critical eyes. Lilian received him with a frivolous badinage that was reassuring, and he heard her go through some form of introduction, and perceived that a tall, noble-looking woman was bowing graciously in response to the words uttered.

Under no circumstances had he ever been so

abashed before. But presently he threw off his unusual constraint, plunged boldly into conversation, and ere long ventured to look into Edith's face. He saw that she was a very handsome woman, with soft, large eyes, emphasized by dark, level brows, and thick bands of black hair, hair which had naturally the wave and ripple most women simulate by art. Her complexion was brown, but her cheeks were tinted by the most vivid carnation, and when Joe lifted his eyes to her, and spoke a few words of very common-place tenor, the same bright color flushed her throat and mounted to her wide, low brow. She was dressed in silk, soft in texture, and like old ivory in shade, brightened here and there with bows of carnation ribbon. She affected Joe as some gorgeous tropical flower might have done.

He did not, however, remain long in her presence, for he was troubled about his dress and appearance. He was sure that never before had he worn so unbecoming a coat, nor done himself so little justice. All thoughts of leaving Harrogate were gone as if they had never been. He felt that he would be miserable until he had done something to redeem

the unfavorable first impression which he was convinced he had made upon Miss Bradley.

But Edith did not seem to have been at all unfavorably impressed. On the contrary, when Joe was out of sight and hearing, she said softly, "What a pleasant man! He affects one like sunshine dancing in a room on a changeable spring day."

"He is a very handsome man," answered Lilian. "The girls all admire his glinting blue eyes and delightful temper. He is a great favorite."

"And has he any special favorite? Perhaps you are his favorite, Lilian. That is the reason you wanted to come into the gardens. You knew he would meet you."

"No, indeed, Edith. I fancy his love would be hard to win; and maybe it would not repay the girl who would be spendthrift enough to squander her own on it."

Then Edith rose as if the subject no longer interested her. "Let us go into the house," she said. "It has suddenly become dull. Is it going to rain, I wonder?"

CHAPTER V.

JOE PLEASES HIS FATHER.

Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd.
If money goes before, all ways lie open.
Love's reason's without reason.
Stony limits cannot hold love out;
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.

IN every life there are moments which are turning-points. After them nothing is quite the same, and no effort brings back the something which has been lost or changed. Joe left Edith Bradley's presence conscious of this feeling, and half resentful at it. He asked himself what Luke Bradley's daughter could be to him. He had been taught to hate Luke Bradley, and he had done so thoroughly. To love Edith was, in a fashion, to eat his own and his father's words. "Father would have a good right to be topping angry at me if I did such a thing," he mused; "and I'm sure he'd

think that I did it just to make him angry. I wouldn't do that, not I!"

But, in spite of his efforts he could not keep the beautiful Edith out of his mind. He decided to leave Harrogate, and then found half a dozen reasons for not doing so. In three days he was deeply in love and beginning to realize his position. It was all the harder now to contemplate giving up all hope of winning Edith, because she had been so genuinely kind to him. In many ways she had shown her pleasure in his society and her preference for it, and Joe found it impossible to resist her many charms when he was within their influence.

This sweet uncertainty of love, this determination to do one hour the thing which it is determined not to do the next hour, is the very atmosphere of an affection which is at once alluring and unwise; and Joe was restless enough under the circumstances. One evening, as he was walking through the pretty town, full of vague longings and very positive anxieties, he met Edith. She was so unaffectedly glad to see him, and she blushed so brightly when she looked into his face, that Joe forgot every thing but the delight of the hour. Without

any direct invitation she walked with him into the outskirts of the town.

They found a rustic stile leading into a shady pasture, and, as if in obedience to his unspoken desires, Edith walked through the grass by his side. They spoke little, for silence seemed to be so eloquent. And oh, how sweet was the silence between them! In the twilight they drew closer to each other and began to converse softly about their own past lives. Edith told him that she had been educated in Bristol because she had an aunt living there; that she had scarcely returned home ere her father died, and that, ever since, she had lived at Bradley Court.

Joe thought she must be lonely there, and wondered how she could manage so large an estate. And Edith admitted that she very often was a little lonely; but that, as for the estate, it was easily managed. She had her father's old lawyer and agents to help her, and, she added with a sharp laugh, "I should know very well, though, how to take care of it without them."

During that walk Joe's last scruples gave way. He determined to win Edith if it were

possible; and when this determination had been arrived at, he began to tell himself that his father had, in a manner, cast him off; that nothing he could do would be likely to be satisfactory, and that, therefore, he might as well marry the woman he loved.

And he thought about Edith's riches until they became quite unobjectionable. His profession had been, as yet, a failure. He had adopted it in a kind of bravado; he did not like it, and he had no special genius for it. In his heart he knew that he was never likely to be a successful lawyer. His money was nearly gone. His father was practically dead to him, his aunt too poor to give him pecuniary aid; four years of luxury and self-indulgence had made him far less inclined to face the strife of life than he had been on that night when he elected to take his own way and £5,000.

To be master of Bradley Manor and the husband of the handsome Edith Bradley was surely not a bad lot in life. If fortune designed him so much favor, why should he throw it away for a few sentimental objections? The idea became familiarly pleasant to him. He

was determined to let every thing go in order to realize it.

And Edith had that proud nature which would rather confer an obligation than accept one. Directed by the impulse of her own heart, she had singled out this handsome youth for her favor in the very hour of their meeting. Still, she was more cautious than impulsive. She desired to be better acquainted with her lover's character. Above all she wanted to be certain of her own heart; and she waited for its assurance with a curious eagerness, wondering often by what name she ought to call the sweet tumult in her breast, the longing for Joe's presence, the restlessness in his absence, the influence which he personally exercised over her.

One morning in the following spring, she awoke with all these doubts settled. She had had a wonderful dream. She had dreamt that she loved Joe. And the dream had been so delightful that it made her heart ache to awaken from it. It was the settlement of the question to her, and it influenced her manner in some such sweetly subtle way that it was almost as perfect a revelation to Joe. That afternoon, as they walked in the garden, with

the glory and the freshness of the spring around them, Joe asked Edith to be his wife, and Edith told him her dream, and let him read it as he wished.

The few hours that followed were so wonderful to Joe that they actually changed for a short space the youth's countenance. It was so bright and joyous, he held his head so high and stepped so proudly, that Martha Thrale could not but notice his exaltation, the more so that it was in such direct contrast to the moods of anxiety and depression he had recently been subject to.

"Well, Joe," she said, cheerfully, "thou looks middling happy to-night; and I'm glad to see it. Whatever is up with thee?"

"The best bit of luck that can come to any man, Aunt Martha."

"Does ta mean wedding?"

"Yes, I mean wedding. What do you think of it?"

"I niver waste time thinking o' it. I am too old, and thou art too poor. Wedding is naught in my line, nor in thine either, I sud say."

"But, aunt, I have won the noblest prize in England."

"I hev heard a sight o' men and women say t' vary same thing, when t' craze to get wed comes over 'em. And I hev noticed that it is most sure to come to such foolish folk as hev no knowledge o' private arithmetic and can't reckon up ta difference between their incomings and outgoings."

"I am not one of that kind, aunt. And if money can make us happy, she has plenty of it."

"I don't say that money can make you happy, Joe; not it! Folks usually expect a deal more happiness from money than it iver gives, either men or women. Who is ta going to marry? Or, rather, who is going to marry thee."

"Miss Bradley."

"Niver! Niver!! Niver!!!

"She is that, though. And there is not a better or a lovelier woman in the world."

"Owd Luke Bradley's daughter?"

"To be sure."

"I wouldn't hev thought it of thee! Does ta remember all t' wrongs he did thy father? I'm not on t' side of Amos Braithwaite mostly, but I do think it is a shame o' thee to tak' t'

daughter of his life-long enemy for thy wife; I do that! Why, he'll niver forgive thee."

"I stood by my father while he stood by me. Now he never so much as asks if I be living or dead. He can hardly expect me to give up Edith in order to carry on his spite against a dead man. I'd be a fool if I did."

"I never said thou wert a wise man, but I don't think a fool is iver a big fool until he gets himsen married. Thou hasn't made £50 in a twelvemonths. How is ta going to keep a rich, fashionable lass like Edith Bradley?"

"Miss Bradley has £6,000 a year, beside the income from Bradley Manor. That is something."

"Happen it is and happen it isn't. But if ta wants to marry £6,000, do it, my lad. I don't think thou wilt be any too good for such a job if ta tak's to it, Joe."

Nothing Joe could say reconciled Martha Thrale to the marriage. Good lasses come from good stock," she said angrily; "and I think little o' Luke Bradley."

"I never heard any one but father say anything wrong of Luke Bradley. He was a very

good churchman, and his hands all spoke well of him."

"Thy father had his own opinions of Bradley, and if ta was a good son thou would surely stand by thy own family."

"Right or wrong?"

"Right or wrong, for sure! But I mak' no doubt thou would go against me also, if there was £6,000 a year for that job too. When is ta going to be wed?"

"In a month."

"My word! Thou *is* in a hurry. I sud think thou might give thy father a chance to say a word about bringing t' Bradleys into his family. It isn't fair, Joe; it isn't a bit fair of thee."

Such conversations were very common during the hurried interval, though, as the wedding day drew near, Martha grew more and more taciturn. She wanted Amos to know the step his son was contemplating, and yet she could not make up her mind to be the informant. The news, however, reached Amos in a still more direct way.

It happened that Joshua Perkins had the management of the Bradley estate, and a few

days before the proposed marriage was to be celebrated, Joe and Edith rode over to his office together in order to sign some papers. The business was pleasantly transacted, and the lovers were cantering up the street together, when Amos Braithwaite's gig stopped at the lawyer's door.

Perkins stood just within it, shading his eyes with his hands, and watching the happy, handsome couple. When Amos was at his side, he pointed them out to him. The *trop-a-trop, trop-a-trop* of the horses' feet was flung back in resonant echoes, and Perkins, with a soft, unctuous laugh, said, "Dost ta see that bay gelding thy Joe is riding? It's worth four hundred guineas if it's worth a halfpenny; and it can do *"proputty! prop-ut-ty! prop-ut-ty!"* quite as well as that farmer's nag some o' them great poets made a song about."

"Whativer is ta talking about?"

"That is Joe Braithwaite."

"I don't need thee to tell me that, I sud think."

"Does ta know t' lass he is with?"

"Not I. I'd be middling busy if I tried to keep up wi' Joe's sweethearts."

"Ay; but thou wilt hev to know this one. Why, it's Luke Bradley's daughter, and thy Joe and her are bound to mak' a wedding of it."

"Joshua Perkins, be quiet, will ta! Our Joe and Bradley's lass! Thou doesn't know what ta is saying!"

"I know varry well what I'm saying, and thou wilt find it come out so whether ta believes me or not."

"Thou caps me! It's a bit o' news I can't tak' into my head at all."

"Well, I don't blame thee. Thou may well hev a wondering spell. But it is true as Gospel. I hev drawn out t' settlements, and they hev just signed 'em. My word! but she is a clever lass! She'll keep what's her awn on t' safe side."

"Joe wer' allays going up and down among t' women wi' his heart in his hand! but to think o' Bradley's lass taking it! Is she worth much?"

"Bradley Manor and £6,000 a year. And she is varry handsome, and sharp as a steel-trap."

"Say no more, Perkins. Joe will be knock-

ing his head against t' stars soon; he'll be that set up. Lookee, Perkins," and Amos drew a long bill from his pocket-book and pointed out certain items against which he had put a pencil-mark.

"What does ta mean by charging me i' this way? I'll niver pay it—niver!"

"Business, Braithwaite, business."

"Cheat'ry, thou means. If this is business, thou sud hev taken out a license to steal. I want to start an action against John Deaconson for me'lling wi' my beck, but thou s'all not touch a paper till this bill is settled. Now then, what is ta going to do about it?"

"The charges are quite reg'lar."

"I'm reg'lar too in t' courts; and I'm almost as good a lawyer as thysen."

Perkins laughed, and then ran his pen through the objectionable items as he said: "One bear does not bite another bear, Braithwaite, and it wouldn't pay me to eat thee up."

"I sud think it wouldn't. There's outsiders for thee to whet thy teeth on. See here now." Then he laid before the lawyer his complaint and his instructions, and in their consideration he seemed to have entirely forgotten the news

about his son. But he had not. As he rode back to Bevin Mill he thought of nothing else, and he looked at the affair in a way that would probably never have suggested itself to any one but Amos Braithwaite.

He had begun his manufacturing life as a hand in Bradley's mill, and in the subsequent years all the relations between the men had been of the most exasperating kind. But Amos regarded his son's marriage with Bradley's daughter and heiress as a kind of providential retribution in his favor, and he was in a triumphant state as he muttered to himself, "How t' owd turkey-cock used to snub me! How he used to gobble round and set me in Cold-shoulder Lane as often as iver he could! And only to think o' Luke Bradley tueing and scrimping himsen and saving a' his brass for my Joe! It caps me all to bits!" and he flecked his whip so emphatically that the horse really imagined him in a hurry, and went at a pace through Bevin village that would have astonished Amos himself had he been conscious of it.

But in that hour some very unusual thoughts had possession of his mind. Unknowingly,

almost defiantly, Joe Braithwaite had done a thing which seemed to Joe's father a particular providence for the settlement of his claims against the dead-and-gone Luke Bradley. Amos could believe in a special providence when it undertook the righting of his peculiar personal grievances, and he kept ejaculating in the excitement of his satisfaction, "It's fair wonderful! It's a clear providence! It's what I niver could hev expected! And I hev no doubt at all that t' proud, miserly owd fellow knows all about it. My word! If he does, my Joe will be plaguing him far worse thon even t' devil himsen can manage it! He will that!"

CHAPTER VI.

MASTER AND MISTRESS OF BRADLEY.

There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.
'Tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus,
Love is love to the end of the reckoning.

THE whole affair was such a wonder to Amos that he could not eat his dinner. "I am more than satisfied. I'm heart-full," he said, as he pushed the platter and plate aside. "A bit o' tobacco is all as iver I need to-night; my own thoughts are a good meal, and plenty o' it. Joe has given me my dinner, and a right good one it is! T' lad is no fool, why, of course he isn't. He's my son. It 'ud be a varry strange thing if he didn't know what side his bread was t' best buttered on."

Then it occurred to him that he might go into Bradford and buy the handsomest bit of silverware or jewelry he could put his hands on. He had never said he wouldn't give Joe's

wife a present, and he could send it without a name, and so avoid the bother of thanks, which might lead to an interview, and far more concession than he had any intention of making at this time, even under circumstances so agreeable to him.

He lay awake a long time that night, picking and choosing among Joshua Wilson's fine silverware and brooches and bracelets. And as men wake and muse in the dark midnight, they are either better or worse than their usual selves. Amos was better. He remembered Joe's pleasant ways and bright presence and handsome face. Vague, longing plans for bringing back his banished son flitted through his mind. He was quite resolved to send Edith a silver tea service, and as handsome a bracelet as he could put his fingers on. And feeling all the glow of his kind intention, he fell happily asleep.

But while he slept some evil angel whispered doubtful and irritating suspicions into his ear. He awoke with a sense of injury, and the first thoughts of his heart were: "Mebbe, now, Joe is marrying Edith Bradley just because he knows I hated her father so heartfully. He

thinks it will spite me, happen. Or, I sudn't wonder if he is aiming to set himsen above me. He'll hev more brass now to fling away than I hev, and he'll get among gentry that wouldn't know Amos Braithwaite, no, not if they passed him fifty times a day. I hevn't any objection, I'm sure—only, come to think o' it, I'd be more than a fool to waste my money on owd Bradley's lass. I won't do it! Folks hev a lot o' soft thoughts in t' night time, to be sure. It's a blessing that a bit o' common sense comes back wi' t' sun up."

His experiences of life had led Amos always to attribute the lowest motives to the human heart; and so he let these baser second thoughts rule him. Yet he was morose and unhappy under their sway, and his hands, with the intuitive penetration of servants, divined the cause of his ill-temper, and decided with great satisfaction that "he hadn't been invited to t' wedding, and thet it served him right."

But one morning there came to him a note in white satin and silver. It was an invitation to be present at the marriage of Joseph Braithwaite and Edith Bradley, at Bradley Court. Within this fine missive there was a strip of

ordinary writing paper, and on it Joe had written four words, "Do come, dear father."

He held the whole in his large, brown, hairy hand a few minutes, looking steadily at them. Then, with a smile, in which anger and satisfaction were queerly blended, he dropped the gay festival cards into the fire, and as he watched them turn to ashes he slowly fingered the strip of paper that bore his son's entreating message, "Do come, dear father."

He hesitated about burning it, and to hesitate is generally to give up or to give in. After a few moments had passed, he took out his pocket-book, and put the bit of paper into a compartment intended for postage stamps, but which he never used for that purpose. And while doing so the question of a wedding-present again crossed his mind. But this time it came when every thing was adverse for its realization. He had just been buying largely, and needed all his ready cash, and, besides, it suddenly struck him that silver or jewelry was just so much cash buried in a casket or drawer and not paying a penny of interest.

"A bit of good chinaware is all I hev, and all I want in my house, and I niver owned

aught in t' way o' jewelry but a silver watch mysen," he muttered; and Amos was not the man to think the requirements of any other person greater than his own. Thus, every kindly thought perished in suspicion and avarice.

It would have made Joe happy if he had known of their existence, transient as it was. He watched anxiously for some answer to his request, and he was hurt and disappointed when none came. All the more so, because Martha Thrale had also positively refused to be present at the marriage. She had taken a great dislike to Miss Bradley at their first interview. She fancied that the young lady tried to patronize her, a mode of treatment which highly offended the independent Yorkshire woman.

"She wanted naught that Edith Bradley hed; she was welcome to her fine house, and her grand friends, ay, and her handsome husband, too. She hedn't a word to say either for t' wedding, or against it. It was none of her affairs," etc. Yet to her favorite Wesleyan preacher she admitted that "Miss Bradley was that kind o' young woman as allays set her teeth on edge."

"Her tenants speak well of her, Miss Thrale," he rejoined, "and it is our duty to hope for the best."

"To be sure, sir. I hev heard that she is sweet as May flowers to them as she can order and hector! Niver mind! It won't be very long before Joe Braithwaite will get to see into his folly a bit."

"She is lady of the Manor, you know, Miss Thrale, and it is her duty to take some authority upon her. She ought to reprove the idle and the slovenly, and see that those under her do their duty."

"She does it varry well, and varry often, if all reports be true. And, if she is anything like her father, she'll tak t' sharp edge off Joe Braithwaite quick enough, if she thinks he's getting a bit too for'ard or independent. I hope she will. I'm not sorry for Joe, but I am for Joe's father. I don't set much store by Amos Braithwaite, but I know this wedding will be vinegar and gall to him. Joe hed a right to think of his father, and it's hard on me too, it is that! I've done iverything for Joe, and then he marries such a lass as I can not abide to go to t' wedding. And me that

fond of going to weddings, and allays full o' good wishes for young things beginning life together."

"It is a little hard, Miss Thrale, but perhaps you may yet make up your mind to go."

"Me go! Why! I've said I wouldn't go. I am none o' them women who say no, and then yes."

But though Martha stayed at home to please her own kind of pride, she deeply regretted not having seen all the fine dresses and wedding presents, and not having been present at a feast which included among its guests a bishop, a baronet, and a member of Parliament. There was a full report of all the grand doings in the local paper, and Martha Thrale read every word of it with the greatest interest and the most minute attention.

Amos also read it; and he had his own opinion of the proceedings, and of their probable results.

"A bishop and two parsons!" he said, sarcastically. "I wer' married by t' Methody preacher in Baildon Chapel, and I found out as t' job wer' varry well done."

He had noticed Joshua Perkins's name among

the list of guests, and he waited anxiously for him to call and say something about the ceremony. But Perkins did not even pass Bevin Mill.

"He thinks if I have to go and see him I'll bring a bit o' business wi' me, as an excuse—for he sells ivery word he speaks, does Joshua, or tries to—but I'll do nowt o' t' sort. It would be such a wedding as niver was if t' news of it was worth paying for."

So he went to see Perkins, and made no excuse for the visit. "I heard thou was at Joe's wedding," he said, without any preliminary. "Well, then, what kind of a time did ta hev there?"

"It was a varry grand affair, Mr. Braithwaite."

"What is ta 'mistering' me for? Thou knaws my name well enough, and thou hes call'd me by it a few times, I think."

"I was thinking of thee as connected with t' young couple of Bradley Manor, I suppose, so a little formality would come natural."

"Think o' me by mysen, will ta? I'm not a mite better for t' connection, and I don't think

mysen any better for it. Why sud I? So there was great stirrings, I hear?"

"The best people in the county were there."

"To be sure, and I hope t' best people did something to show what they were."

"If ta means in t' way o' presents, Amos, I think they did, ay, I think they did. Varry handsome indeed! I heard the silver alone was worth £2,000. I'm astonished thou didn't send a bit o' plate o' some sort."

"Thou would hev been far more astonished if I had sent a bit of any sort at all. They'll be going to live at Bradley Court, I reckon?"

"Eventually."

"*Eventually!* Now whativer does ta mean?"

"I mean that they are gone abroad for some months."

"Gone abroad! Gone abroad! What nonsense! Where hev they gone to?"

"To Paris first, and then to Rome."

"Well, that caps all I ever heard of. Paris and Rome! Joe ought to be 'shamed o' himsen. He knows what I think o' such carryings on. I sud hev thought London and Edinburgh might hev been good enough for 'em."

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of

Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" quoted Perkins, for the moment quite well pleased with his own adaptation. But Amos did not understand the allusion, and he answered with some asperity, "What is ta saying? Them sound varry like Bible words."

"They are Bible words."

"Then what is ta using 'em here for? Thy office isn't a fit place to be talking of t' Bible in, I sud think. When is Joe coming back to England?"

"Now then, Amos, I am not thy catechism; and I'm partic'lar busy this morning. There is going to be a big fight between John Henry Wade and Timothy Crawley about t' right and t' wrong of their spinning-jenny patent; and I hev to tak' a hand in it."

"Hes ta? Then I'm sorry for t' man, whoiver he is, as thou art going to mak' out to be t' varry biggest blackguard in a' England."

The compliment was fully appreciated by Perkins; and it put him in a good humor. He rose and laid his hand upon Amos in a very friendly way. "Listen to me a bit," he said. "Don't 'ee worry thysen about Joe Braithwaite. He's done a grand thing in wed-

ding Edith Bradley. Why, a tell thee, Amos, he may be i' Parliament at t' next general election. I'll back him for it. Thou ought to be proud o' such a lad. He does thy bringing up a deal o' credit. And thou ought to hev been at his wedding, and sent him off wi' a thousand pounds in his pocket. I wish ta hed."

"I dare say ta does, seeing thou wouldn't hev been any loser by it. Good morning to thee."

"Good morning, Amos. Thou may tak' things middling comfortable about Joe now; my word for it."

"Don't thee charge me for thy word; mind that. I didn't come here to ask thee for it. I'll not pay owt for it."

In the main, Joe was at this time quite of the same opinion as Perkins, with regard to his marriage. True, there had been several slight disagreements before the ceremony with regard to its arrangements. Perhaps, with reason, Joe had felt Edith to have been more positive than he liked; but then a woman may surely be positive about a circumstance so directly and distinctly personal. Still she had failed him on a point equally important to his own

feelings. For he had wished her to write to his father and aunt, and try to conciliate them a little; and her firm refusal to do so had pained him very much. The glory of his marriage feast was dimmed by their absence, and he was almost painfully conscious of the exclusively Bradley influence.

Edith had reigned at Bradley Court as sole mistress, and the habit of authority was easily confirmed in a woman of her temper. And whatever power she might delegate to Joe after their union, it was very evident he could not assume any control before it. So that, necessarily, he was frequently placed in a position apparently subordinate to Edith. However, men in love generally assume with voluntary eagerness just this part, and Joe, as a lover, was scarcely averse to Edith's pretty, masterful ways.

And after she became his wife, circumstances for a time were all in Joe's favor. They were nearly a year upon the continent, travelling in countries whose language Edith could not speak. But Joe, in spite of his father's opposition, had managed to acquire a very fair knowledge of French and German, and Edith was

therefore compelled to rely entirely upon him in all the exigencies of travel and dangers of foreign shopping.

So during their ten months of travel Joe had everything very much his own way. In all their movements Edith deferred, with a charming air of reliance, to his judgment; and Joe found a certain pleasure in very often relinquishing his judgment for her desires.

But when Edith returned to Bradley she was on her native ground, and she quietly but firmly resumed the power she had temporarily abdicated. Nor could Joe very well complain. He knew nothing of the affairs of Bradley Manor, and Edith knew all its sources of revenue, knew the capabilities of every acre, the net results of meadow and corn land, and the probable amount of rent.

The day after their arrival at home, Perkins came to Bradley Court and had a long interview with its mistress. Joe happened to be at the stables when the consultation began, and when he returned to the house no one remembered to call him to it. And the young husband was too proud, perhaps too offended, to make any claim to a privilege not, under the

circumstances, offered him. He waited half an hour, in hopes of being summoned, and then ordered his horse and rode into Leeds to see Martha Thrale.

He had some fine lace for her, and a Roman brooch; and the dear old lady was not proof against such a peace offering. She kissed Joe tenderly, and he was glad of this evidence of a love, long-suffering and faithful, even through slight and neglect. For he had not written to her at all while he was away, and there was still a little heartburning about her absence from Joe's wedding. She had only wanted a little personal urging from Joe and Edith, and they had not given it. So in her heart she believed that she was not really wanted; that, in fact, they were both a bit ashamed of her homely speech and unfashionable ways.

But all her anger vanished when Joe took her hands, and stooped his handsome head for her welcoming kiss. She was pleased with his remembrance and willing to forget her own sense of wrong. She asked many questions about Edith, and in the course of conversation learned of Perkins's visit.

It was the first thing which brought a cloud

upon her sunny face. "Thou sud hev taken thy proper place, Joe, this morning, and that was at thy wife's side. Thou hes made a big mistake, I fear me."

"I was not asked to take it. And when I heard them counting money, I did not care to seem to make a claim about it, so I thought I would come over and see you for an hour. At any rate, if I have to speak to Edith on this matter, it is better to do so when we are alone. I never trusted in Perkins's friendship."

"Now, then, I'll tell thee what will happen. When ta gets home, Edith will be on her dignity a bit, or else she'll be heving a 'hurt' feeling at thee. She'll pretend that thou doesn't like business, and that thou got out of t' way of it by coming to see me. Thou hes played into her hand, my lad, finely."

"You see, aunt, she might be settling up with Perkins. I can attend to her business quite as well as he can for the future. If they were having a final settlement, it was better for me not to interfere."

"Does ta really believe that Perkins will give up to thee? Not if he can help it. Now, then, stand up for thy rights, Joe. Edith is that kind

of woman as will think the better of thee for it."

And, somehow, though Martha had not intended to do so, she sent Joe home with a slight sense of injury in his heart, and a slight stubbornness of will in regard to his own future.

CHAPTER VII.

THINGS THAT TROUBLE.

Alas, how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!

He that lacks time to mourn lacks time to mend.
Eternity mourns that. 'Tis an ill cure
For life's worst ills to have no time to feel them.
Where sorrow's held intrusive and turned out,
There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,
Nor aught that dignifies humanity.

FROM his conversation with Martha Thrale, Joe rode home in a thoughtful and despondent mood, for when warning or doubtful speeches hit us hard it is generally because there is some similar doubt or warning in our own breasts. And Joe did feel dissatisfied as to his position and uncertain as to his movements.

At Edith's request he had closed his office in Leeds before their marriage; and though nothing had been said on the subject he naturally expected to have the charge of the Bradley

Manor estate. Also, very naturally, Perkins had no desire to relinquish so profitable a part of his business. So something very like the conversation which Martha Thrale anticipated had really taken place that morning.

With words of praise for Joe's generous, gay disposition, he had nevertheless managed to make Edith feel that this very gaiety and generosity were in opposition to the steady, solid qualities necessary for the welfare of her farms and investments. She was strongly conservative by nature. She preferred the same people and the same methods; she distrusted change of every kind, and she had, perhaps, too high an opinion of her own business tact, and too low an estimate of her husband's. It was Perkins's interest to strengthen both these views, and he did not scruple to administer the amount of flattery and distrust suitable to his policy.

"I hev hed t' entire charge o' Bradley Manor for more years than you hev been in t' world, Mrs. Braithwaite," he said, "and my father hed it before me. There isn't a rood of land I don't know t' full value of; and as for t' leases that are running, and falling in, it is summut

like an education to be up wi' them. Mr. Braithwaite is the best o' good men, kind-hearted and generous beyond iverything; but it isn't kindness and generosity that will make Bradley pay. A landlord, or lady, hes to be a bit hard these times to get their money back; and you hev some tenants, ma'am, as would just tak' their awn way wi' Mr. Braithwaite, that is, unless you make out to do the business yourself; for I will say that there are varry few lawyers in Yorkshire that could do it better than you, or be a bit more prompt and even-handed in a' their ways."

"If you think Mr. Braithwaite is not able to manage Bradley yet, Perkins, why, then, I shall not try to do what you fear unadvisable for him to attempt. It would be placing my husband in a very peculiar position."

"Naturally."

"So you had better retain your charge for this year at any rate. During the interval Mr. Braithwaite will have time to become familiar with the tenants and the land."

This appeared to be a fair and thoughtful arrangement both for the estate and the master of it; and Edith explained it to her husband in

her very sweetest way. But Joe did not receive the explanation with the gay indifference of a man whose sole business in life was to get rid of trouble and enjoy himself. He grew white with anger. He said very plainly that he thought his wishes in the matter ought to have been consulted, and he added, with some sense of injury, that he did not like his wife taking his business aptitudes at the valuation Joshua Perkins chose to put upon them.

They had had little disagreements before, but when a disagreement includes serious money considerations, as well as a personal slight, it has in it elements of heart-burning not easily soothed. And ignoring a household offence does not by any means cure it. Joe did not again allude to Perkins, and Edith endeavored to make her interviews with him as unobtrusive as possible, yet both were conscious of the perpetual wrong inflicted by this want of mutual confidence and interest.

However, Joe had naturally a hopeful heart, and his gay temper and fine health combined with it made him turn with readiness, in the main, to the brighter side of his position. He was soon an immense favorite with the gentle-

men in his neighborhood. If there were a county ball, or hunt, or public dinner, or political meeting, Mr. Braithwaite, of Bradley Court, was sure to have the management of the many troublesome details necessary to its success.

And for a little while Edith was pleased and flattered by this social *eclat* and favor. It was a kind of popular endorsement of the wisdom of her marriage. For in her deepest consciousness she was often uneasy on this point. She knew that her father had planned a much grander lot for her. He had fully expected that her fortune would buy her a title, and give her through a noble husband the freedom of those charmed circles which his own birth and education prevented him from entering. So, though she was unaware of his hatred of Joe's father, she was nevertheless very certain that her marriage with Joe would have been a great disappointment to him.

For a few months then she was pleased and flattered by her husband's popularity. She liked to go to balls over which he exercised a mimic sovereignty. It was something to see noblemen ask his advice, and noble ladies

defer to his wishes, even on such trivial matters as a hunt dinner or a masquerade. But all earthly honors and pleasures have this great drawback: they are dependent upon circumstances, and they lose their value and charm when these circumstances change. In time, the very certainty of Joe's position, and the general favor in which he was held, deprived the small social triumphs of all their value.

Through them Joe had attained his position, but when it was won the steps to it were an offence to Edith. She began to feel that Mr. Braithwaite was imposed upon in such matters. She ignored the fact that his social standing had been obtained through his gracious willingness to oblige, his fine tact and taste, his handsome appearance and good manners. It became the habit of her mind to consider the real source of Joe's honor was that he was the nominal lord of Bradley Manor. She preferred to think Joe drew all from her love, rather than from the approbation of Sir Thomas Wilson or Lady Charlton.

For some weeks Joe had perceived her dissatisfaction. Lady Charlton's notes were tossed aside with contempt, and when the

baron called for Joe's opinion or Joe's company she did not, as at first, array herself splendidly and charm the nobleman with her delicate hospitality and gracious kindness. But in the middle of the winter festivities she spoke to Joe very plainly on the subject. They were sitting at breakfast, and he handed her a note from Charlton Castle. Sir William was going to dine at the Coursing Club, and of course the dinner would be incomplete without Mr. Braithwaite, and Lady Charlton besought his advice in reference to the ball which was to close the entertainment, etc. There was also a very charming note to Edith, but this morning it was received with even more than her late indifference.

"You will go, Edith?"

"No, I shall not go. They simply ask me in order to secure your services. Lady Charlton was barely civil to me at their last dinner party."

"Really, Edith, I thought it was you who were barely civil."

"Joe, let us understand each other on this subject. I think you have been an unpaid steward for every one's entertainments quite

long enough. If our acceptance in county society depends upon your being a kind of lackey to Lady Wilson and Lady Charlton, I think we had better retire from so humiliating a position."

"Certainly, if that is the way you look at it, retire at once. But I want you to know, Edith, that nothing could induce me to lackey *any* lady in the sense you seem to infer."

His cup was in his hand; he set it down with a little temper, and rose from the table, though the meal was not finished. Edith glanced into his white, angry face, and then added in her most deliberate way: "There is great need of our economizing. There are two leases out, and Perkins says the farms will have to be re-let for a much smaller sum. The stables require at least £100 spent upon them, and all the fencing on Croftlands needs painting, as you have probably noticed."

"I have not noticed Croftlands at all."

"You might have done so, I think."

"But why? It is not my place. You pay Perkins to use his eyes."

"You could use yours also; the best paid service will bear looking after."

"Edith, if I am not able to manage your property I will not be a spy upon a man whom you affect to trust. If I were in Perkins's place, would you set Perkins to look after my work? But it is not Perkins, but Lady Charlton, that I am interested in at present. Will you go to Charlton on the 18th or not?"

"Since you put it in that form, I say most decidedly I shall not go."

"Then, of course, I also shall refuse."

"Your refusal can be no real loss to you. Chasing a poor trembling hare to its death, or making a complimentary speech at a dinner, or even ordering a cotillon, are very poor pleasures, I should think, when they become a kind of steady business."

"You never spoke any truer words, Edith," and he walked to the window and looked gloomily into the white park, with its sombre beauty of leafless trees and unbroken snow. Will it be believed that he was remembering at that moment, with a genuine regret, the great mill at Market Bevin, and longing for the stir of its traffic and the stimulating tumult of its looms and hands?

"Chasing a hare, making a speech, ordering a

cotillon," the words left an echo in his ear and in his heart which would not die. He felt a shame that stung him like a whip, and he wanted to bear it in solitude.

"I am going to drive over to Leeds," he said. "Is there any thing I can do for you?"

"What are you going to Leeds for?"

"I want to go. I really have no other motive."

"You want to see that old woman who lives there."

"If you mean Aunt Martha, I suppose I do want to see her. I have not called upon her since Christmas."

"Then you need do nothing for me. I shall not mix my affairs up with her in any way. By all means make her paramount."

It was not a very pleasant concession to his desire, but that morning Joe did not mind it much. A sudden disgust for his aimless, useless life had fallen upon him. When he found himself in Martha Thrale's home the feeling deepened. Her house was full of boarders. The comfort of a great many people was in busy hands. But she was very cheerful amid her pleasant cares, and quite proud of the

handsome profit she was making. Perhaps her life interests were not great, but they sufficed her, and she really looked happier than the fortunate bridegroom of twelve months ago.

She spread Joe a little lunch, and then sat watching him as he trifled with his knife and fork. "Why, Joe, thou doesn't eat. What's t' matter wi' thee? And thou doesn't look well. Try and eat a bit, my lad."

"I am not hungry, Aunt Martha; and I'm a bit worried beside."

"Now then, Joe, if t' worry is about Edith Braithwaite don't tell me. I hevn't a word to say between a man and his wife."

"It is not about Edith. It is about work."

"Work! Now thou caps me! Whativer hes thou to do?"

"That is the trouble. I have nothing to do. I am wearied to death for want of work. Going to hunts and dinners and balls isn't work. I don't know how men manage to spend all their seventy-five years amusing themselves."

"Ay, lad; and at t' end they'll hev to account for t' time. God isn't going to take this

for a good bill o' reckoning, *Item:* 'spent upon my awn pleasures a' my life long.'"

"I am tired of living for amusement, Aunt Martha; I am ashamed of it."

"Well, then, it is t' best news I hev heard o' thee for a long time. What is ta going to do? Thinking isn't much use. What is ta going to do?"

"I do not know."

"Then try and find out. Isn't thy awn business good enough for thee?"

"I spoke once about it, but Edith will not hear tell of such a thing. I should have to begin in Leeds again; there is no nearer place. I did not succeed before, what hope is there for me now? Every one would say, his own wife does not trust him with her affairs, how can we trust him?"

"Isn't ta going to manage Bradley Manor next year?"

"I shall not ask for it; and Perkins has succeeded in making Edith believe it will be ruin for any one but himself to manage it. You see, Perkins's father had it in his hands before Bradley bought the place. And Edith dreads change. If Bradley were in my care, I

should have a hard time, I think. She would be fearful of all I did, and perhaps going quietly to Perkins for advice. You can see how it would be likely to make trouble between us. That is the reason I do not urge my right to control it. Edith has a very poor opinion of my business ability; perhaps she is right, aunt. I am a bit of a failure, so far, I think."

"Thou art nowt of t' sort. Thou hes been in t' wrong road, and doing t' wrong work, and nobody can mak' wrong come out right. Thou hesn't either t' head or t' heart fit for one. Can ta talk out o' both sides o' thy mouth like Tom Halifax can? Can ta bamboozle folk as Perkins can, till they arn't sure whether they can add two and two together unless he shows 'em t' way to do it?"

"Very well; if I am not a lawyer, what am I?"

"I suppose thou art what folks call a gentleman at present. But I don't think that is what thou hes a taste for. Thou wer' meant to be a man, and do a man's work. Thy brains are spinning brains, and thy hands are spinning hands, and thou sud be in Bevin Mill this varry minute. Why-a! when thou was but ten years

old thou tried to mak' a loom, and as for dyeing yarns, thou kept me in a mortal fright wi' thy experiments when ta was learning chemistry."

"Yet you wanted me to be a preacher?"

"Ay, but that's a different thing. Each man hes a talent for one special kind o' handy work; but ivery man ought to hev a talent for serving God."

"And when I said I would not go to the mill, you said I was right, and stood by me."

"For sure I did; and I'm not t' first woman that iver set her temper above her reason. I sud hev hed sense enough to put things on their right footing. I sud hev reasoned t' matter out like this: Amos Braithwaite is aggravatingly masterful, and Joe is going against him just because he is determined to show he'll hev some o' his awn way. Going to t' mill was t' biggest thing thou could cross thy father in, and young men of twenty-two like to feel their liberty to mak' or mar their life as it pleases them. And I wer' a bit tired mysen o' thy father's hectoring, and when ta said thou wouldn't go to t' mill, I wer' bound to stand by thee, right or wrong."

"But you thought I was right?"

"Sometimes I thought thou was right, sometimes I feared thou was wrong. And a few months ago I met Tony Warps and John Thomas Mason, thy old companions, and they told me that thou hed allays said to them thou wert going into Bevin Mill; and they reckoned it took t' breath from them with surprise when they heard o' thee taking up with t' law business. So ta sees I hev been putting this and that together, and I hev come to t' conclusion that t' law wer' just a suggestion of t' devil's that night when thee and thy father were quarreling."

"Well, it is past remedy now."

"I don't think so at all. At t' last end a man can allays go in for politics and Parliament. I sud think law and politics would be finger and thumb. But I'll tell thee what, Joe, thou isn't made for running wi' dogs, nor dawdling after ladies, no, nor even for carrying Mrs. Braithwaite's purse, and looking after her fences. Thou hes thy awn work to do. And now that thou art sick o' playing t' fine gentleman, I think thou will do it."

"If I only knew what my work was!"

"Look about thee. Don't tak' t' first

thought that comes into thy head. First thoughts are mostly foolish ones. If thy temper would hev let thee hold thy tongue that night thou said thou would be a lawyer thy second thought wouldn't hev made a fool of thee."

"But every day is of importance to me now."

"Ay, thou art right in a general way. Every day is a little life, my lad. Old Jacob numbered his life by days, and Moses asked God to teach him t' same kind of arithmetic, to number, not his years, but his days. Joe, thou will do well yet. I hev heart trust in thee. But don't thee forget among bigger things to eat thy meat and tak' thy sleep. Grandest plans that were iver made hang a good deal on eating and sleeping. Thou hasn't eat any thing worth speaking of."

"I was not hungry, Aunt Martha; and I sleep well enough. I am not one to let day's worry drive away night's sleep."

"Thou would be a fool if ta did. Any man lives miserable that lies down at night like a camel under his burden. Is ta going? Well, God bless thee! And after all, Joe, t' varry

best advice I hev for thee is, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord,' and if He directs thy path, then, my dear lad, thou will be well provided for both worlds."

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE AT BRADLEY COURT.

Now let us thank the Eternal power,
That oft the cloud which wraps the present hour
Serves but to brighten all our future days.

Happy are they that hear their own detractions and can put them to mending.—SHAKSPEARE.

IF the conception of all good resolutions met with no hindrances, but progressed steadily towards their realization, how broad and easy would be the path of progress. But the rule seems to be a persistent set of all unfavorable elements against any effort whose goal is a loftier ideal. In the first place Joe's aspirations were yet vague and unformed. Only one point was determinate in his mind—his independence.

He foresaw, even thus early, that if he continued a passive sharer of Edith's wealth she would learn to regard him with something very like contempt. He did not blame her much.

He felt that in their case the natural order of reliance had been reversed. When they were lovers this condition had been invested with a certain glamour. Edith was then in a royal mood. All that she had was too little for Joe's deserts; besides, for there is generally a weak spot in our grandest resignations, she did not think it likely that Joe's father would be long at variance with his only child. And she had heard of the wealth of Amos Braithwaite. At the end, she felt assured, she would have done very well for herself.

The attitude Amos took at their marriage was a disappointment to her; but in the honeymoon days it was a circumstance to be treated lightly, and even hopefully. She still expected some wonder of forgiveness and generosity from her husband's father. She thought any reasonable man would look over the offence of a son who had brought him so desirable a daughter-in-law.

But as week after week went by, her feeling toward Amos became an actively angry one. She considered herself insulted by his attitude. She began to fear that the threat of Joe's disinheritance was one the old man meant to

carry out. And whenever she had any small losses, or was fretted about money matters, she made little speeches of spite and disappointment about him.

Joe would not listen to them. In spite of their foolish quarrel, he had a strong affection for his father. Also, he looked at the quarrel from a man's standpoint. Women threaten the greatest extremities, and forget every threat in the concession they want. But Joe expected his father to do precisely as he had declared he would do. He would have been quite as much astonished as pleased if Amos had "backed out" of the position he had taken. And Edith had frequently been told so, only a woman's desire is her conviction. So, in spite of Joe's assurances, she persisted in believing that the dispute between father and son was a passing affair. She urged him to try and meet his father, to give him an opportunity to see and to speak to him.

"You could pass him between here and Leeds any market day, and you ought to try to do so, Joe," she urged. "I am sure all that is needed for a reconciliation is an interview."

"I don't think so, Edith. If I happened to

meet father when he was in a certain temper, he would pass me without a look; and if he did it once, he would never retreat from that attitude. I don't want to bring things to such a plight between us. It is better not to force events. And I could not deceive father. He would know it was not an accidental meeting, and if he spoke at all it would probably be to ask me what I was dogging him round for."

"He must be a brute."

"No, he is not a brute. He is a stubborn man who thinks a deal of his word. He would stand to it though it meant ruin to him. There are plenty of men like him. I don't know but in his place I should do the same. And it's a capital thing to feel certain where you have a man, even though he is dead set against you."

The tendency of such conversations was to gradually increase the plainness and the temper of their remarks; and Joe felt all the bitterness of a wrangle which touched lives so close to him, and which, unfortunately, seemed to spring from his peculiar attitude to both.

Yet his situation was so fenced in by social

bonds and obligations, by uncertainties of various kinds, by restricted outlets, and want of ready money, that the way into life's larger lists was hard to find.

The summer months passed away, and he could do nothing. Edith was in ill-health; she went to Moffat and Matlock, and she would go nowhere without Joe. But even amid the idlers and pleasure-seekers around him, a steady purpose was hourly growing in the young husband's heart. Vague as the first sprouts of some unknown plant it might be; but there was life in it, and the intent of perfect growth.

In his position the avenues leading to independence were not very many; but the most impracticable of them found a calm, favorable welcome in Joe's consciousness. There was, as Martha Thrale had suggested, politics. He could, doubtless, make a good run for Parliament, but even in that effort he would be between the horns of a dilemma. Edith was an intense Conservative. Amos was an intense Radical. He could not employ his wife's money against her own party and prejudices. And, though Perkins made him understand that money would be forthcoming if he took

the Radical side, Joe did not like the idea of an election quarrel on his own hearthstone.

He thought of a commission in the army. He thought of borrowing money and building a mill. He thought, in a furtive and frightened way, of California, Australia, Canada, India. Edith would have been shocked if she could have divined what sombre speculations made her husband so quiet among the crowds at Moffat or in his own rooms at Bradley.

The next winter was a wretchedly dull one to him. He had withdrawn from the hunts and clubs and dinner parties of the previous season. Edith had counted up their cost with ugly knittings of her black, handsome brows, and Joe had no mind for festivities which she would neither share nor approve, and which were likely to be preceded and followed by domestic disputes.

But as Nature sets herself instantly to repair any wounded part of the body, so some higher Power, if we would but notice it, speedily turns our mistakes this side and that side, until good can be wrought from some of their phases. The days were interminable to Joe, so he took to study. Chemistry had always fascinated

him; he fitted up a small laboratory, and soon forgot every thing in the charm of his experiments and hoped-for discoveries. It is true, they were usually futile and disappointing, as well as expensive, but hope sprang from every failure, and Edith had sense enough to understand that these things were far more economical than many other sources of recreation open to bored and weary men.

As for herself, she felt no *ennui*. Independent of the charge which she shared with Perkins, she had her house and her conservatory, her toilet and her visitors, her embroidery and her stated charities, besides a very large family of pet animals and birds. Her days were too short for all the small cares that filled them. And these she would gladly have shared with Joe, but to him they were insignificant and uninteresting. How could a man on the verge of discovering a new color feel an ardent pleasure in the curls of a pup or the right shades of green for a worsted parrot?

The early part of the third year of their marriage was brightened by an event which for a time merged all interests in itself. Edith had a son, and it seemed as if the whole neighbor-

hood was delighted to rejoice with Bradley Court. The young mother and the beautiful boy enjoyed for a few weeks a prominence very pleasant to Edith, and for the time she considered herself an exceptionally happy woman.

But however proud and fond Joe was of his firstborn son, the babe could not fill his life in the same way as it filled the mother's life. Its advent had softened his heart, and made him think a great deal of his own father, but in a few weeks he went back with a fresh delight to his books and retorts. Even for the child's sake he did not wish to be a mere idler and looker-on among the world's workers.

Fully to his own heart, and partly to Martha Thrale, he had admitted the mistake made upon that unhappy night when he flung away his father's love and his fine inheritance for the gratification of his personal pride and selfwill. But the fit of inaction and despair which usually follows such awakenings was a short one in Joe's case. He was not disposed to look upon his mistake as an irrevocable one. He had been twice on the verge of a discovery which promised him at least the foundation of a fortune; and he was one of those men who can

dog after an idea with a patience that is almost genius.

Joe was gradually working his way towards that stile which Providence intended him to cross, but he had every step of the intervening road to take, the hard and the easy, the hopeful and the despairing. Now and then there were days in which Edith expressed a little interest in his studies and efforts, and then he was full of enthusiasm; but more often she was scornful at his failures or fretted by their waste and inutility.

The neighbors with whom Joe had been such a favorite talked over the change in him with a tolerant contempt. Some divined the truth, and thought him wise to retire from a position only to be retained by his wife's concession. Others attributed his strange taste to the inherited vulgarity of his descent. "He is a born tradesman, with mechanical aptitudes," they said. "He has gone naturally to the dyeing vats, and will eventually go back to the looms." The air and tone of the remark was a compliment to their own superior tastes, and in the feeling of self-satisfaction it induced they rather pitied Joe, especially as their wives

were inclined to say those disagreeable things of Mrs. Joe which naturally engage the sympathies of more fortunate husbands.

One morning, when the child was four months old, Edith said, "The bishop is to be here in a month; suppose we christen baby at this visitation."

"I think it would be a very good thing to do. The little chap ought to be made a Christian as soon as possible."

"I shall send to London for a robe for him. And we must have a dinner to honor the event. About the name now."

"Yes; about the name."

"I think he ought to be called after my father."

"Why so?"

"Well, he will be heir to all father made."

"I hope I may also make something for him."

"Out of jars and retorts?"

"Don't be scornful, Edith. Many a retort has left a fine residuum of gold at the bottom."

"I say he ought to be called Luke."

"I would rather you chose any other name."

"Why?"

"A man who bore that name did my father a great many wrongs. I am sure he would regard our giving it to the child as an insult to himself."

"Ridiculous! Do you wish him called Amos?"

"It might be a good thing to call him Amos, but I will not ask such a favor as that of you. I only stipulate not to call the boy Luke. Any other name will do."

"I have made up my mind to call him Luke."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, Edith, but I will not allow my son to bear that name."

He spoke with a decision that made Edith look with wonder at him, and the set calmness of his face irritated her. She reiterated her resolve with much warmth, "I shall certainly call him Luke."

"Then I shall certainly contradict, even at the altar, any godfather who gives him that name. I hope you will spare yourself, and me, such a scene in church; and also consider what an unpleasant event it would be to remember against the child."

"You durst not do such a thing."

"Do not trust to that opinion, Edith. I solemnly assure you that I will contradict the sponsor, whoever he may be, that calls my son Luke."

"If he is not to be called Luke, I will not have him christened at all."

"As you please. There are scores of good English names. Why need you select the only one that will give pain and offence?"

"Luke was my dear dead father's name."

"By calling our son Luke you can not please his dead grandfather, and you will surely trouble and anger his living grandfather. Choose any other name and I will agree to it."

"He shall be Luke, christened or unchristened."

"He shall at least not be christened Luke. That I can and will prevent."

Then he turned to his books, and Edith left the room with a determination to carry her point. But a little reflection convinced her that Joe in this case was not to be trifled with. She had seen him in the same mood several times, and she had never known him to recede a letter from the text of his threat. She did not wish to bring their private quarrel to an

issue before the clergy and the congregation, so the christening of the child was indefinitely put off.

But this dispute saddened Joe beyond all former ones. It was evident to him that the mistake made in his life had the power to project itself throughout it, and blight all his sweetest and most personal joys. He suddenly felt an invincible distaste for his study and his work. He saw that there was no redeeming power in it.

For three weeks he was very miserable—miserable because he felt so hopeless. And three weeks looks a dreary time to a soul without hope or purpose, though he who shapes the destinies of men for eternity makes these painful pauses in life no longer, doubtless, than is absolutely necessary to enable the dead hopes to bury their dead, and animate the living ones to some newer and better purpose.

At any rate, at the end of three weeks a reaction came. He was sitting in his laboratory, but he was not working. He had not kindled a light for many days. He was telling himself that he was still stumbling on a wrong road. "At the best I have but blundered upon a few

facts that are useless without their connecting links; well, then, Joe Braithwaite, try again! You must go back to your father, sir, rather than be beat."

When he had reached this resolution Edith entered. She had an open letter in her hand, and she looked so handsome and had such a grand way with her that Joe could not help noticing and admiring her beauty. "How much I could have loved her," he thought, "if I had been the owner of Bradley Manor, and she had had nothing but her love and her beauty to give me."

Her first words, however, had in them that unfortunate pleasantry which always irritated Joe.

"I am come as a client, Mr. Braithwaite, if you have not forgotten your law, and have time to attend to my case."

"Don't chaff me, Edith. You know I have plenty of time. I have nothing else but time. Sit down. I shall be glad if I can do you any real service."

They sat down together with a dreary politeness. Edith thought she had been snubbed. Joe had an equally unpleasant feeling. Then

Edith touched the letter, and said, "It is from Sykes, of Manchester. He offers to buy the house I own there. He says he will give me £10,000 for it. What do you think of the offer?"

"If the house is worth £10,000 to him, it is very probably worth more to you. Have you asked Perkins?"

"Perkins is in London. Sykes urges an immediate answer. Will you go to Manchester and see about it? I don't like trading with Sykes at a distance. When he is on the spot, he has us at an unfair disadvantage."

"Yes, I will go, if you wish it."

"You will get all the papers relating to the property at Perkins's office; and if you want any advice—"

"I don't want any advice. I know my business as well as most lawyers do."

"Of course. Then you will go to-morrow morning?"

"I will get the papers, and leave for Manchester to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER IX.

JOE'S FORTHPUT.

Fate was not mine, nor am I Fate's:
Souls know no conquerors. —DRYDEN.

Money, being the common scale
Of things by measure, weight, and tale,
In all the affairs of Church and State,
Is both the balance and the weight.
—HUDIBRAS.

SO Joe rode over to Market-Bevin and procured the papers relating to the Manchester property. He lingered a little in the familiar streets of the place, and looked with interest and with some vague regrets at the old Hall where he had certainly spent more than twenty very happy years. With still more interest he passed the mill that might have been his own. Its massive masonry trembled with the titanic labors of steam and machinery. From hundreds of open windows came the hum—m of the wheels, and the great chimney seemed to

be consciously proud of its height, and of the volumes of smoke it cast out into the blue mid-air.

The ponderous gates were shut. No visitors, no idlers, no curious people, were wanted in Bevin Mill. Business only procured an admission there, and Joe had no business now with its master. And yet he longed to see him. He took the road past Bevin Mill twice, though it was a little out of his way; but the tightly shut gates depressed him; they seemed to typify the inflexibility of his father's angry determination.

And as he rode home through the lonely lanes a purpose that had often drifted through his mind assumed a positive form. He began to consider it as practicable; he decided to follow it out. But the decision was an important one, and its very consideration imparted a solemn and resolute air to his face and manner.

Suddenly, as he turned into the high road, he met his father. Amos was in his gig. He was reconsidering a bargain he had made, and was oblivious to such an unimportant matter as his horse's speed; so the animal was placidly jog-

ging along at the pace most comfortable to himself. It was one which gave Amos no excuse for passing his son, and perhaps he did not wish to pass him, for when Joe said, "Why, father! How are you? This is a bit of luck to meet you!" the old man's face brightened, and he answered, "I'm well enough, Joe. How art thou getting along?"

"Very well, father."

"I daresay. And how is my daughter-in-law? She doesn't think much o' me, eh? And I hear thou hes a son o' thy awn. Mebbe now thou will come to find out that fathers hev some feelings. Whativer brought thee this road?"

"I was at Market-Bevin. I passed the mill twice in hopes of seeing you."

"Nay, then, I don't stand at t' gates watching folks pass. Was ta at Perkins's?"

"Yes. I went to his office for some papers about a bit of property in Manchester. I am going there to-morrow to sell it, if the price offered be a fair one."

"My word, Joe! I wish to goodness owd Luke Bradley knew thou wer buying and selling t' property he scraffled and scraped for. I think

it would be a punishment as would pay for a few of his meannesses. Well, my lad, good-night to thee! Say, Joe, what is ta goin' to call thy son? I'll bet thee a shilling Mrs. Joe will be givin' him her father's name."

"I'd let him go without a name at all before I'd have him called Luke."

"Thet's right, Joe! Thet's as it should be. I was a bit bothered at the thought of a Luke Bradley Braithwaite. It doesn't sound right, does it? And I kept thinking to mysen, 'if Joe tacks a rascal's name before Braithwaite, it will be a shabby thing to do.'"

"Joe wouldn't do it, father; not for all the money Bradley left. If I had my way I would call him Amos. He's a fine little fellow, and he wouldn't be any thing but an honor to the best name going."

"Would ta really call him Amos? Well now, Amos is a varry good name. I niver heard tell of any blackguard called Amos, and happen it might be a good thing for t' little chap, happen it might. I must hurry a bit now, Joe. Good-night to thee."

"Shake hands, father, *do!*"

"Why-a! I hev no objections. I'm none o'

them unreasonable fathers that can't see good as well as bad in a son. Thou vexed me in one thing, and thou hes pleased me middlin' well in another. I sall strike a just balance between thee and me, Joe."

Then he leaned forward and grasped Joe's hand, and if the young fellow had only thought to bend down his handsome head, doubtless Amos would have done involuntarily as the tender Judean father—embraced and kissed him. But neither of the men were naturally demonstrative, and both were slightly embarrassed even by the advance made. So they parted quickly, and with less warmth of manner than might have been expected; but the warmth was at their hearts, and Amos found himself humming the only song he knew when he stopped at the mill gates.

The next morning Joe left for Manchester. Edith had really intended to make the trip a pleasure to her husband, and send him off under cheerful auspices. But women with nursing babies cannot be sure of their moods early in the morning. The child had been restless all night. She could not trust the nurse, and she lost her own sleep. In conse-

quence, she had a headache and was fretful and nervous and quite unable to command the smiles and pleasant words she had intended to give.

But Joe was hardly conscious of her silence and her irresponsive way. Perhaps he ought to have been; ought to have understood her languor, and the evident marks of suffering on her face. A word of sympathy might have brought sunshine and exchange of courtesies and confidences. But Joe had many things on his mind, and Edith's lassitude and reticence in the morning were familiar conditions to him.

"Good-bye, dear Edith." He took her hands and kissed her with a tenderness which touched the weary woman. At the last moment she made an effort to be sweet and loving, but a leaden weight was on every emotion; and she took his farewell with a passive apathy which very little expressed her real affection. For she was in the power of a contradictious listlessness, the result of a physical condition she was hardly to be blamed for. And oh! how many a household quarrel, miserable in its results, arises from causes as really unoffending

in intent and as little within the control of women who are physically exhausted.

At the door Joe suddenly turned and asked for his son. Under a hurried protest the child was brought sleeping. He kissed and laid him in his mother's arms, and Edith saw there were tears in his father's eyes as he turned away. She was dimly troubled by the circumstance. Joe was only going on a short journey; he would return in a few days. She had not understood before that he cared so much for the child.

For the first hour or two, Joe enjoyed the simple sense of perfect freedom. He was alone. He was not afraid of offending, either by omitting to do something he should have done, or by doing something which he ought not to have done. The air was fresh and exhilarating, the sense of motion and of change delightful. He enjoyed these things with the healthy physical enjoyment natural to a young and perfectly healthy man. But, ere long, he withdrew himself from mere outside influences; his eyes became thoughtful, his mouth settled into firm, definite curves, there was an air of

purpose and resolution, in every movement he made.

Arriving at Manchester, he first of all devoted his attention to his wife's interests. After their satisfactory settlement Joe had business of his own to attend to. It took him to Spinning-Jenny street, a locality full of warehouses. In a few minutes he stood opposite the largest one. It bore the sign of *Samuel Yorke and Sons*. There was a link between himself and that warehouse; one, as yet, uncertain and untried, but he intended to test its strength.

Samuel Yorke was his godfather. The relationship had indeed been merely a nominal one, filled by proxy, and acknowledged only by handsome presents of baby plate and jewelry; but it was connected with memories stretching much further back. For Amos Braithwaite and Samuel Yorke had been close companions in those days when both boys sold papers in Bradford Market; and Joe knew that in every great event touching either of their lives, letters of sympathy passed between Bevin Hall and Manchester.

He had never seen his godfather, and he knew nothing of his character; but he looked

at the sign above the door, and felt his fears fade and his hopes rise. For its very retention there argued a true and tender heart, since the firm was no longer "*Samuel Yorke and Sons.*" Eight years previous, about the time Joe and his father separated, Samuel Yorke's two sons were killed with their mother, in a railway accident. Eight years! and yet the father had not brought himself to remove the sign put up with such happy anticipations just before their untimely end. At that time Amos had written to his friend, and told him to be thankful that he hadn't a living sorrow instead of a dead one. "Thy two sons," he said, "followed thee in all things, and were proud to put their names with thine, but I have a lad, disobedient and wilful, who has disappointed every hope I have had for twenty years."

After looking at the sign a few moments, Joe pushed aside the door and found himself in a long room full of tables piled high with printed calicoes. It was a dusty, dusky place with an oily smell; and, in spite of the number of clerks and salesmen, exceedingly quiet. He asked for Mr. Yorke, and was directed to an

inner room whose door he opened. When he did so, Yorke stood facing him.

He was a small, thin man in shabby clothing, with an old hat pushed backward from his forehead. But there was an unmistakable look of master and millionaire about him. He was standing at a table on which lay freshly-opened letters, most of them containing samples of cotton; and as he pulled the snowy fibre slowly through his fingers he was softly singing a Methodist hymn. He looked up with a bit of long staple in his hand, when Joe entered, and stopped at the end of the line:

There is a land of pure delight,

and looked curiously at Joe. He knew him ere Joe had time to introduce himself, and said: "Why! Thou must be Amos Braithwaite's son. Downsitting and uprising, thou are thy father's varry likeness."

"Yes, sir; I am Joe Braithwaite."

"For sure, and my godson. I'm glad to see thee; sit tha down. Whativer has brought thee to Spinning-Jenny street? There's no wool here for you West Riding men; it is a' this stuff, lad," and he gathered the samples of cotton, with a swift movement, together, look-

ing almost lovingly at the "stuff" as he did so.

"Well, godfather, I didn't come to buy either cotton or wool. I came to sell a bit of property that belonged to my wife."

"To be sure! Thou married Luke Bradley's daughter. I heard a' about it; a rich lass. I knew Bradley varry well, too well, happen; he was a hard man. He had property all over. Whativer did he awn in Manchester?"

"The house next the Queen's Hotel. Sykes was the agent for it. You know Sykes?"

"I sud think I do."

"He wrote and offered us £10,000 for it."

"Too little, far too little."

"Yes; I sold it to the proprietor of the hotel for £22,000."

"That's far more like t' proper figure. But Sykes will allus feel as if thou had cheated him out of £12,000. He's that kind, is Sykes. Well Joe, thou must stay wi' me to-night. I want to hev a long talk wi' thee."

"Eh, but I want to stay with you much longer than to-night?"

"Well, tha's welcome in reason, ta knows. But whativer is ta going to stay i' Manchester for?"

"I want to apprentice myself to you. I want to learn your business from A to Z."

"Thou tak's my breath. I thought thou wer' a lawyer, learned and licensed?"

"I am a very poor lawyer, and I never shall be any better one. I took to the law out of pure contradiction, and I never made £100 by it. I want to be a cotton spinner."

"Why not go to thy father and learn to be a wool spinner? One kind is as good as t' other. And thou would be near Bradley and thy wife and child. What does it a' mean, Joe?"

"I will tell you if you care to hear."

"To be sure I do; only, I'll hev no half confidences. Tell me iverything or tell me nothing, t' bad as well as t' good."

Joe was only too thankful to have some sensible kind man to open his heart to. He did not spare himself in any respect. Yorke listened patiently, watching the young man's mobile, expressive face with a good deal of interest, but never interrupting his confession. When Joe had finished, he said, "Thou hes gone wrong iver since thou left thy father. That was thy first wrong step."

"It was not all my fault. Father is so masterful."

"Well, then, he is master. And it was thy fault. 'Honor thy father.' That is t' commandment, as I read it. Men's laws have so many provisions and amendments and whatnots that they need a lawyer to mak' head or tail of them. God's laws are, do this and don't do that. A man, though a fool, can understand them. "It is 'honor thy father.' That is plain enough."

"But if a father is wrong, or—"

"It is 'honor thy father'; good, bad, or indifferent. There are no ifs in that command."

"A father may be tyrannical, unreasonable, unkind, unjust—"

"For sure, I reckon t' Almighty knew there would be them kind o' fathers; and he didn't make any exceptions. But I say that thy father is none o' them. Go to him, and ask him to tak' thee 'prentice."

"It would be no use. He told me I should never have part nor lot in Bevin Mill, and when father says a thing in the way he did then—"

"I know; he'll be as stubborn as if stubbornness were his religion."

"As to my wife—"

"As to thy wife, I don't blame her. Women talk a deal about love, and lots of feelings with varry fine names, but I tak' notice that they think the most of t' man that can mak' money. It is varry well for a rich man to marry a poor girl, and give her iverything he hes; that's natural, and she tak's naturally to it; but when a rich woman marries a poor man, that's a varry different thing. And, putting this and that together, Mrs. Braithwaite hasn't done so badly, I think. As soon as ta gets to making money she'll be a model wife, I sud think."

"I do not like to associate my wife with such opinions. Why should she think more of me if I were making money?"

"Because money is only t' visible result of a great many qualities women like men to hev, pluck, patience, good sense, good manners, industry, and what not. I'll tell thee what, Joe, when ta sees a man that is a first-rate money maker, ta sees a man that is capable o' doing lots of other things, better than most men can. I wouldn't be proud of heving made money if

I didn't think so. And when a woman sets her heart on a man that can mak' money she's more likely to be right than wrong."

"Very likely; we won't mind that now. Can I stay with you, and learn how to make money?"

"Listen now. If I tak thee thou wilt hev to do my way, and not thy awn. I'll hev no fine gentleman 'prentice. If ta wants to mak' thy living wi' clean hands, don't thee come to me. I am at business ivery morning at eight, and I stay till five."

"Your hours shall be mine, I promise."

"Thou must learn a' about spinning and weaving; a' about dyes and dyeing; and thou must tak' thy share o' t' work in t' printing room. It is a hard business. Thou wilt be dirty, and hot, and tired most of thy time, and I'll not engage to tak' thee for less than two years. Even if ta hes ivery advantage it will be that long anyway."

"I will agree to all you desire."

"And thou will hev to live with me."

"With you?"

"For sure. If I tak' charge o' thee, I'll hev thee under my awn roof, and my awn eyes."

This was more than Joe had contemplated.

Among the compensations he had promised himself was the lonely freedom of evenings devoted to his own will and way. Yorke saw the momentary hesitation, and explained: "That will suit thee, Joe, and thou wilt soon find out how well, for if thou art as tired as thou ought to be, thou will want no ither thing but thy bed. And if I ask thee to go to t' chapel with me on a Sunday, I think in a little while thou will like to go well enough. My own dear lads thought it no hardship;" and he looked at Joe with such a depth of yearning, sorrowful remembrance in his eyes, that Joe's heart was sincerely touched.

"It was a great sorrow, wife and sons in one hour," he said softly. "I wonder it did not break your heart."

"Nay, nay! Hearts tak' a deal o' breaking thet hev their trust in God Almighty. Now, then, tell me where ta bides, and go write thy letters and pack thy valise!"

"I am at the Queen's Hotel."

"Get thee ready, then. I'll call for thee soon after five o'clock. And I'm sure thou wilt do more than well. I can see thou hes plenty o' forthput in thee."

CHAPTER X.

EDITH'S HARD BLOW.

Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reason why we smile and sigh.

Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
The work of their own hearts, and that must be
Their chastisement.

IN the meantime, Edith was neither anxious nor unhappy. She had not one of those sensitive, looking-forward souls which feel the shadow of coming events. Presentiments did not visit her ; if they had, she would probably have referred them to some physical cause. Joe's sober, almost solemn farewell and the mist of tears in his eyes, she understood just as little. She was both annoyed and pleased by the circumstance; annoyed, because she had the common English hatred of any thing like a scene, especially before servants, and going to Manchester was not a thing to be

made an event of. It was not the air of good society. At the same time she was flattered by her husband's evident emotion at their parting.

"He must be very fond of baby and me," and the thought made her quiet and silent for a little while, and she hoped Joe would have a pleasant time and manage the business he had gone about in such a way as to make any interference of Perkins in it unnecessary.

Then she turned with a busy interest to the affairs of her household. She had determined to make some changes, and she thought Joe's absence a suitable opportunity. In ordering a staff of tradesmen and servants she was in her element ; it was wonderful how much she got out of every one. And thus employed the days passed rapidly away ; she had no time to speculate and no time to be lonely.

Joe's first letter was just what she expected it to be. It related only to his journey and to his first impressions of the cotton metropolis of the world. His second referred to the business he had been sent to transact. It was short and sensible, and gave her a feeling of respect for her emissary in the matter. The

third letter, informing her of the sale of the house for more than double the offered price, was a genuine surprise. It came while she was eating dinner and gave her pleasant food for reflection all the evening.

Perhaps after all she had done Joe an injustice. Now that she saw a prospect of managing without Perkins, she could afford to recall a number of little things in which she was sure he had overreached his proper charges. The total of his last bill had been unusually large. "He is meddlesome, too, and very dictatorial. I'll pay him off, and Joe and I will manage Bradley. It may be a happy thing to do; at any rate we can try, etc., etc."

Thus she mused, for there was a real sentiment of regret in her heart, and something more than suspicion that after all she had not given Joe a fair chance. By word and deed she had snubbed him. Practically she had let Perkins snub him also. She was not well pleased at herself, and she was quite angry at Perkins. Poor Joe! She intended to order events rather differently for him in the future and she meant also to tell him that she had been unjust to him and that she was sorry for

it. For though a proud, self-sufficient woman, she was, as such characters often are, essentially just.

She was indeed quite eager to begin her reparation. She expected Joe home the next evening, and unusual preparations were made to honor his return. The house had been renovated, and had that festival air which new draperies and decorations give. She ordered an elaborate dinner, and dressed herself and baby with tasteful splendor. For was not Joe coming home in a kind of triumph? He had more than bettered expectation. She wished him to feel that he had done well, and that she was appreciative and grateful.

As she stood before the glass tying her bonnet-strings, she smiled over her excitement, and the fresh color it had brought to her cheeks and the brilliant light to her eyes. She looked critically at her dress and laces, and changed her ribbons for a set whose tint Joe always admired. There was no mean withdrawing, no keeping back part, no selfish reservation, in Edith's submission. The reparation she intended to make her husband was to be as perfect as possible. The opportunity she intended

give him was to be untrammelled by doubt of interference.

She went to meet the Manchester train with a heart full of kind and just thoughts. She had no doubt of Joe's arrival, and when she did not see him among the alighting passengers she was so much astonished at her disappointment that she could not for a few minutes believe in it. She went home depressed, and an unhappy feeling she could not banish dashed the enthusiasm of all her good intent.

There was a later train, and she sent the carriage to meet it, but this time she remained at home. It was baby's hour, and besides the first glow of her feelings had been chilled. Joe had failed her. She told herself that whenever she had made some extraordinary effort to brighten and sweeten things between them Joe had always failed her. She had fretted her heart into a no-use-trying temper before the time for the second train, and she made no attempt to renew the pleasant anticipations which had been so promptly disappointed.

Of course the carriage returned without Joe. The coachman said he could not have been mistaken. Only two gentlemen had left the

train, Sir Thomas Wilson and Mr. Selby. But there was a letter. The postmistress had given it to him as he passed.

She took it indifferently, and opened it almost with a feeling of anger at Joe's unnecessary delay. The contents stunned her. She turned sick, and her heart beat as if every throb was its last effort. But there were servants present, and she would not betray herself before them. By a supreme effort she managed to go through the usual form of dinner.

Then she went to her bedroom and locked the door, and sitting down spread the letter out before her. Word by word, following the words with her jewelled forefinger, she read it through:

"My Dear Wife—I hope you are satisfied with the settlement of the Manchester property. I received the money to-day, and forward a cheque for the amount stated in my last, deducting only the regular charge on the conveyancing, etc. This money I have retained, because I shall not be at home again for two years. To-morrow morning I begin my apprenticeship to Samuel Yorke, cotton spinner and calico printer. I intend to learn the business, in all its processes, practically. I have lived too long upon your bounty, for I have lost your esteem as well as my own; and I deserve the

loss. Please God I will redeem the past, and with His help make a man of myself. When I am worthy of your love, worthy to be your husband, you will respect me; and until then, think as kindly of me as you can. Even for baby's sake I must try and deserve something more than forbearance, and it is better he should not know me at all, until I can rightfully claim it. Dear wife, if you will write often to me, it will strengthen me for my effort, and give me all the hope I need for the future."

Joe had not been at all satisfied with this letter, but every effort at an explanation of his motives and purpose seemed hopeless; for he had been led to the step he had taken by a complication of causes past and present. So he finally concluded that Edith would be likely to remember all, without his indexing events and influences, and that the shortest letter would be the best one. If there were any thing to be said in his favor her own heart must discover it in order to permanently influence her.

But every letter has its peculiar atmosphere. It is often quite independent of the words, and much stronger in its influence than they are. Plain and undemonstrative as Joe's letter was, Edith felt that he had put his best and tenderest self into its few lines, and she had to sum-

mon all the strength of her soul to the task of reading them.

She was white as the paper on which they were written, and she sat for a long time as still as if she had been turned into stone. What would her neighbors say? And all her social equals and friends? She would get the blame; women always did. How cruel it was of Joe to place her in such a position!

These were her first thoughts, but more unselfish ones soon followed. The very brevity and humility of Joe's letter was a mighty eloquence to her. Fine sentences or reproaches would probably have failed to touch her; they would at least have roused her to defend herself. Joe had not blamed her; but her conscience did. Every hour it said harder things to her. Joe had unconsciously struck the noblest chord in her nature. And in taking his destiny so calmly and resolutely out of her power he had suddenly become her master. Her old admiration for his beauty, his sunny temper, and kind heart, returned with tenfold power. She had never been as much in love with Joe Braithwaite as she was in that hour,

when she knew that he had left her to regain the prerogatives of his manhood.

But when the first shock passed away she began to reason clearly. She must have advice. She must have the moral strength of companionship, and she must have some one to rely upon and to go to in emergencies. She never had a hope that Joe would now recede from the position he had taken. Even if she humbled herself before him, and gave every thing into his hands, it would not bring him back to her side. She felt positive that he would stay until the last hour to which he had pledged himself was outrun.

Perkins was her first thought. He would now have to retain the management of Bradley, but between Joe and herself he should not put a single word. She would not name her husband to him, or suffer him to discuss what Joe had done in any way. Who then must she go to? Sir Thomas Wilson had always liked Joe, honestly liked him; and he was in a position to give her the protection and the advice she needed. But he did not like her. She knew it in spite of his smiles and suavity. Neither did Lady Wilson like her, nor Lady Charlton,

nor indeed, when she began to go over the list of her acquaintances, could she find one on whom she could rely.

She did not sleep all night, but toward morning she arrived at a definite plan for her conduct. It had come to her in one of those flashes of intelligence which visit souls earnestly seeking their way out of darkness and difficulty; come with its own assurance so perfect that she never thought of challenging it.

She would go to Joe's father!

So, early the next day, Amos Braithwaite was amazed to see a handsome carriage drive inside his mill gates, and a beautiful, richly-dressed woman alight from it. He had never seen his daughter-in-law, but he knew instinctively that it was she.

And, as suspicion was ever the first feeling in the old man's heart, he muttered, "That's Joe's wife, I'll be bound. Now, whativer is she up to—comin' here this time of t' day?"

Then he retired at once to his private office. He was on the alert in all his senses. "He wasn't goin' to be bamboozled by any woman. And he wasn't goin', either, to let Luke Bradley's lass say a word against his Joe. If there

was sides to be taken he would stick up for his awn side—ivery time!" And while he was thus thinking the door opened and Edith entered.

Her stately beauty, her rich clothing, the faint waft of some delicate perfume that came in with her, quite subdued Amos. She looked at him with eyes full of tears, and said, softly, "Father!"

"Eh? Well, certainly, ma'am. Thou art Joe's wife happen? Sit tha down."

She sat down in the big leather chair that was the particular property of Amos, and, covering her face with her hands, she began to sob; for her courage had suddenly forsaken her, and she dreaded this old man who looked at her so coldly and so curiously.

"Whativer is t' matter wi' thee, Mrs. Braithwaite?"

"Oh! father! father! Oh, Joe—Joe—Joe!"

"Joe hes been up to summat wrong, and he's sent his wife to get round me." That was the first thought Amos had. His next one was, "She'll be sharp as needles if she manages it." But he made some attempt to comfort her; and the more he tried the more Edith wept, and the sorrier Amos felt for her.

"Whativer is t' matter?" he asked. "Come now, tell me all about it If Joe hes been unkind to thee, I'll pay him off mysen for it; see if I don't."

"Joe unkind! Oh, no, father! It is I that have been unkind."

"Oh, ta hes, hes ta? I wouldn't hev believed it of such a bonny woman. Whativer hes ta been up to? I'll be bound he is as much in t' wrong as thou art."

"No, he is not. Joe has behaved like an angel. Joe is the noblest fellow that God ever made."

"Mebbe so, for God hes made a queer lot even in my time. Joe might be t' best of them, and then be nothing to crack about; for Joe is a long way off t' angels. But come now, you hev hed a quarrel—most married people do hev quarrels—what is it about?"

Then Edith told Amos all their domestic troubles. She had thought over things in the night, and had come to a very clear understanding of them. And she did not spare herself. She confessed to all her authoritative ways, her little meannesses, and especially her aggravating determination not to have the baby christened unless it was called Luke.

Amos had hard work to keep a straight face during this acknowledgment of Edith's faults. Over and over, he wanted to have a good hearty laugh. It amused, it delighted him, to think of Joe, who would not submit to his own father, having to bow and beck to his wife. Amos had been an autocrat in his household. That a man should be any thing else to his own women-folk seemed a most preposterous state of affairs to him.

Edith's revelations affected him as a comedy might have done. And all the time he was complacently reflecting that this most unnatural condition of affairs was doubtless a judgment on Joe for his disobedience to him—a very fitting retribution indeed it seemed to the disappointed and unvalued father.

But when Edith told him that Joe had gone, that was a different thing. The quarrel was more than a joke, more than the righteous retribution he had been silently approving. His first private sentiment was one of hearty approval. Being his son, what could Joe do but cast off all rule but self-rule? Then she gave him Joe's letter to read, and his surprise and satisfaction were complete.

"There's summat in this lad after all; summat more than ordinary, Mrs. Braithwaite."

"Please, father, call me Edith."

"Varry well, if ta wants it so. There's a deal in this lad of ours, after all, Edith. I like what he hes done. It is t' most sensible thing I iver knew him do; except happen t' marrying o' thee."

"Father, there is so much that must be done, so much to think of, and I am not able to-day for thought or work. Will you come and take dinner with me to-morrow? To-morrow is Saturday. The mill closes early on Saturday."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know; I hev a deal to do. Meddling between man and wife is a bad business."

"Father, do come. I have no one but you."

"Then I'll come, Edith, and I'll study out things a bit, and I'll give thee t' varry best of advice. I wouldn't go to Perkins wi' this bother if I was thee."

"You are the only person in the world I would have come to about Joe, father."

"And thou will varry soon find out that ta hesn't made any mistake in coming to me."

"What time do you like your dinner, father?"

"I like it at four o'clock."

"Is there any thing you are particularly fond of?"

"Yes, my lass. I'm fond of a roast of beef, and a Yorkshire pudding—well browned. And if ta doesn't mind t' trouble, I'd like a bit of berry pie, and some old Stilton."

"Oh, father, what a sensible man you are! It is so comfortable to have men say just what they want, without apologies or nonsense."

"It is t' right way, and ivery woman knows it is t' right way. If Joe hed only held thee in wi' a tighter rein, both o' you would hev got on varry nicely. Bless thy heart, Edith! women aren't happy if they hev their awn way. It isn't natural, ta knows, and what isn't natural comes to grief."

Then he amused and amazed his hands by escorting her to her carriage. He walked very proudly with the beautiful woman on his arm; and to see the care with which he wrapped her rugs around her, and the courtesy with which he lifted his hat to her in farewell, set the whole mill in a flutter, and divided it into two

parties: one, certain that "t' owd fellow wer' going to get wedded again;" and the other quietly scornful over such an unlikely event. "It's nobbut young Joe's wife," they said.

For once Amos felt unable to cast away his personal affairs, and devote himself to his mill. "I'm fair dazed like!" he said, sitting down before the table and holding his head in his hands. "To think of Joe going 'prentice at this time o' day! Joe Braithwaite is no fool! Going to Sam, too! Well, I niver! Dal it all, it fair caps me! And I hev promised to go to owd Bradley's; no, to Joe's, I mean," and then he laughed heartily, and by sheer force of will compelled himself to examine some yarns and write his letters.

CHAPTER XI.

EDITH WINS TWO VICTORIES.

Wisdom is often nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.

A creature not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food :
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

EDITH left the presence of her father-in-law with a sense of great satisfaction. She had heard that he was rude and cross, and she had feared that he would reproach her. On the contrary he had been unusually kind and considerate. She felt able to face the world, able to endure her husband's absence, with such a father-in-law at her side. In reality Amos had never had any ill-will towards Edith. He had thought well of her in the beginning, for choosing Joe for her husband. During the first year of their marriage, he had watched events

very closely, and had felt personally flattered by the young couple's "carryings on," their visitings at great houses, and their entertainment of great people.

He had read also of Edith's beauty, and he had never missed a word of any paragraph describing her dresses and jewels, even although many of the words were in that objectionable French language, which "hadn't a sensible, understandable word in it." And yet he felt proud of the tone which the italicized words gave to the descriptions; he said them carefully over to himself, and generally from the context arrived at something near their meaning.

So that altogether he was well inclined to Edith. Then he was also one of those fundamental men who have never frittered or scoffed away the natural influence of feminine beauty. A lovely woman, splendidly arrayed, made an easy conquest of Amos. After Edith had gone her influence remained; she left something like a strain of sweet music in his heart all day.

"My word!" he said to himself, "Joe hed a lot o' spunk to mak' up to a woman like that.

I would hev thought of Queen Victoria just as soon. And she called me 'faythe r' too, as natural as iver was. And I'm going to eat a bit o' dinner with her to-morrow. It caps me! I do wonder what owd Luke would say if he knew his daughter called me 'fayther,' and came to me for advice and protection; and that I was going to put my feet under t' grand mahogany table he bought for himsen! Life is a fair whirligig, and nobody can mak' heads or tails of it."

But the whirligig pleased him, and he was so unusually smiling and bland in his manner that the hands snickered to each other over his infatuation, the general opinion being that after all "it took an owd fool to mak' a big fool."

Edith also was quite aware of the triumph of her first move. But she felt considerably more doubt and hesitation concerning her next one. In the afternoon she dressed herself much more plainly. She was going to Leeds to see Martha Thrale, and she had a very certain opinion that Martha would not be won by either beauty of person or splendor of apparel, even though in the latter respect she should outdo Solomon in

all his glory. But the modest elegance of her own black suit was fully compensated for by baby's magnificence. All that lace and satin and fine embroidery could do to enhance the plump, pink loveliness of the little lad was done. For it was upon baby that Edith relied for her afternoon conquest.

The sudden pulling-up of the handsome carriage before the door startled Martha a little. She saw Edith descend from it, and her first thought was, "Joe is varry ill, no doubt, and she hes come for me to nurse him. There'll be summat for Aunt Martha to do, as nobody else likes to do, or Edith Braithwaite would niver hev come my way," etc., etc.

She was putting on a clean white apron and her best cap to such thoughts, when a little servant girl said, "Please, ma'am, there's a varry grand lady in t' parlor, and she's wanting to speak to thee."

"What of that?" answered Martha fretfully. "Go on wi' thy own work, and I'll attend to t' grand lady, when I git ready for her."

And she entered the parlor so stiffly that Edith found it impossible to say Aunt Martha as at the mill she had said father. But Martha

put out her hand and advanced to meet her saying,

"Keep your sitting, ma'am. I hope you haven't come wi' any bad news?"

"I have come to tell you something, Miss Thrale, and to ask you to be my friend."

"There's a deal will depend on what you hev come to tell me, ma'am; and as for my friendship, it isn't worth a half-penny more to-day than it iver was."

"To me it is worth a great deal more. I want you to stand by me while Joe is away. There is no woman living but you that I have any right to ask this favor of. And I want you to teach me how to be a better wife to Joe when he comes back."

"Joe away! What iver does ta mean?"

"I have not been very kind to Joe."

"I sudn't wonder! Well, ta needn't cry. Crying niver helps any body but babies."

"Joe has gone to his godfather in Manchester."

"To Samuel Yorke? Does ta mean that?"

"Yes. He has gone to him for two years."

"For two years! I am fair taken aback."

'He has gone to learn calico weaving and printing."

"But what has he done a thing like that for?"

"He does not want to use my money—I know it is all my fault. Oh, Aunt Martha, please let me call you Aunt Martha—forgive me! I know it is all my fault."

"I haven't a doubt but that it is thy fault. I tell thee, it needs a bigger heart to tak' money than to give money. Joe allus took what I could spare him in such a way as made it a favor and a pleasure to hev him take it. Whativer hes ta been doing to Joe to drive him off to hard work?"

"It began with Perkins."

"There! I said so. I knew it would. I told Joe, t' first morning Perkins took his place in thy business, that trouble had begun."

"I can see now that I treated him badly about the management of Bradley Manor; but I did it for the best."

"I think thou treated him shamefully. I won't mince matters, nor pick and choose my words about it. Thou treated Joe shamefully! Thou threw a doubt and a slur on him before

ivery one. Let me tell thee how people talked of it: 'She may be varry fond o' him, but she's too clever a lass to trust a penny o' her money through his hands. She wants a handsome lad to husband her, but she knew owd Perkins was t' best husband for land and t' gold. Joe Braithwaite is nobbut a figurehead in Bradley. T' varry servants call him t' Missis's husband.'"

"Aunt Martha, please stop. I deserve it all, I deserve it all, but I cannot bear to hear such things."

"How does ta think I liked to hear 'em? Joe is all t' same to me as if he was my own son. I mothered him from t' varry hour he was born."

"Then you should have come and told me how people were talking. Indeed, I think you should! It was your duty to have done so."

"I don't want thee to tell me my duty, not I. I did my duty to Joe—ivery way—until he was thy husband. And ask thysen if I hed come and told thee, say a month ago, or a week ago, what answer thou would hev given me. I'll tell thee; it would have been: 'That meddlesome old maid, that bothering, vulgar old

woman;' and thou would hev looked at me as if thy eyes were pistols. Varry likely thou would hev told me in so many plain words to mind my own business and leave thine alone."

"Oh, I don't think I would."

"Yes, ta would. I hevn't a doubt of it. There wasn't any body in this world that could hev made thee see thy faults but Joe. And I am right glad he hes hed t' gumption at last to tak' his manhood's rights from under thy feet. I am that! I think better o' Joe than iver I did before. And if he wants my help I'll work my owd fingers to t' bone for him; and glad to do it. Poor Joe! Poor, dear Joe!"

"Now you are crying, Aunt Martha."

"I'm not crying for mysen—I'm crying for Joe."

"Don't do it. You make my punishment greater than I can bear. Dear Aunt—"

"Nay, nay, I'm none dear to thee."

"You shall be—you are. Any one Joe loves is dear to me. Let me help you to help Joe. I know he won't take money from me, but let me send some through you. Let us help him together."

"Does ta think I would play Joe a trick like

that? Niver! And I wouldn't deserve to be forgiven. He's gone away to show that he can do without thee. Does ta really think I'd help thee to spoil his plan? Samuel Yorke will pay him all he earns, I'll be bound; and if it is a bit scrimping, all the better, mabbe, for t' poor, dear lad."

By this time, Martha had in a measure lost control of herself; she was softly crying, with her face hidden behind her apron. Edith sat down by her side and, touching her hand, said, "Aunt Martha, are you not going to stand by Joe's wife while he is away? I am sure Joe would like you to do so."

"I don't know. I must hev a bit o' time to think things over. I hevn't liked thee, and thou has niver given me any cause to like thee."

"My father-in-law forgave me at once, and he is coming to Bradley to-morrow, to consider what is to be done while Joe is away. Are you going to be harder than he?"

"Amos Braithwaite allus gave up to a pretty face; it tak's more than face-beauty to get on my kind side."

"Wait a minute, Aunt Martha." Then, to

the old lady's amazement, she left the room in a great hurry, returning in a moment or two with baby in her arms. Before Martha could speak, the child was on her knee. It was fast asleep among its laces and pink ribbons, the sweetest bit of rosy, smiling humanity possible to imagine.

"Joe's baby, Aunt Martha. Will not baby's innocent beauty find your kind side for me?"

The temptation was an irresistible one. She could not help lifting it in her arms. She could not but hold it to her breast, and gaze down into its pretty face. And as she did so it suddenly opened its two great blue eyes and smiled at her. She kissed it, she cried over it, she called it her bonny little Joe; she broke into smiles herself, and, looking up, met Edith's smiles and tears, the very complement of her own. She surrendered completely and at once.

"Tak' off your bonnet, Edith, and we'll hev a cup o' tea together. I can't let t' little lad go just yet. My word! But he is like his father! I remember when Joe was just such another baby. How many teeth has he got, Edith? And he has curly hair, too! But let

us have a' this satin and lace off t' little lad. Eh! but these are bonny socks he hes on his feet! I hev his father's first leather shoes, red morocco, ankle-tights, they are—and I'd like to give him them."

So the two women, with the child between them, sat and drank tea together, and Martha listened to such confessions as Edith chose to make, with more tolerance than might have been expected. But Edith did not blame herself so unreservedly to Martha as she had done to Amos. A kind of instinct told her that it was both unwise and unnecessary. A man can make allowances for the exaggerated self-accusations of a woman suffering from the reproaches of a wounded affection; a woman is never inclined to believe another woman any better than she believes herself.

And Edith had determined, while Joe was absent from her, only to know Joe's friends. If she needed defence of any kind, they were the most proper people to defend her. If she needed society, she would seek it only with them, and thus give no occasion whatever for evil speaking. Besides, she knew they would write to Joe. She wanted them to write of

her, and to write kindly of her. She was determined Joe should hear of her from every side. She would not suffer herself to be forgotten.

Upon the whole her visit to Martha Thrale was a far greater success than she had dared to hope. Martha had taken the baby to her heart, and she had taken the mother on probation. And Edith felt that it would be worth while winning the heart of the stubborn but true old lady. She knew that it was something of a triumph to have obtained from her a promise to come to Bradley once a week, even though the concession had been only won by representing to her that, in order to prevent people speaking evil of Joe's wife, Joe's relations must visit her. For Joe's sake the first visits would doubtless be made, but Edith was determined to very soon win for them a much pleasanter personal character.

The next day, just at noon, the engine in Bevin Mill ceased its panting and groaning, the wheels and pulleys their revolving, and the little streets and lanes around were almost impassable for half an hour with workers loitering homeward. Generally Amos enjoyed his quiet

mill on a Saturday afternoon. He liked to wander through it; to privately inspect all the wheels and bands and looms; and to stand before the resting engine in its fine chamber, panelled with stained woods, and feed his own pride with thoughts of this marvellous creature, the nervous centre that moved all his vast machinery, and gave life to the devil and speed to the shuttle. But this day he had other thoughts and plans. That morning he had received a letter from Samuel Yorke, and in it Sam had dealt as faithfully with Amos as he had personally done with Joe. "But Sam allus lectured me above a bit when we were boys together," he said to himself. "He were allus too good by half." And as these thoughts passed through his mind he spread Sam's letter open on his desk and read it again, preparatory to answering it.

DEAR OLD FRIEND: I should think, Amos Braithwaite, thou would feel a bit ashamed of me having to take thy son in hand, and to teach him how to make a living at this time of day. Joe has come to me for two years, and I am going to do all I can for him. I should ask any one but thee a big apprentice fee, but if I asked thee for one I don't think thou would feel it thy duty to pay it. Joe is a fine lad, and

he would have been a deal finer if thou had brought him up in the way he ought to go. Late as it is, I am going to let him find out what earning his bread by the sweat of his brow means, on every week day, and what going to the chapel means on every Sunday. But thou knows I will be as good as good to him. I shall remember the time when we were hard-working lads together, and I shall remember my own dear lads, and thou need never have one worry about thy Joe. He'll do pretty middling yet, no doubt. Deary me, Amos! How life does go on! It is fifty years ago this morning since me and thee stood on Windhill brow together, and I said good-bye to thee, Amos, and turned my face Manchester way, and thou said "Good-bye Sam," and turned thy face to Bradley Mill. We were lads then, and there were something uncommon like tears in our eyes. Thou hast made a big lot of money since, but don't thee forget what a big fool thou will be if thou does not make out thy title clear to a place in the kingdom of Heaven. And if thou hast not yet done so, make haste about it, Amos; thou hasn't any time to lose. God bless thee. Joe sends his love and respects to thee.

Thy friend,

SAMUEL YORKE.

This letter touched and pleased Amos. He was used to Sam's plain talking, and had generally felt all its truth and kindness. And he took comfort from the fact of Joe being with this man "too good by half," and had far more

respect for his son, and far more hope for his future, than when he believed him to be under the counsels of one able to teach him "how to steal by line and level." His heart, too, was softened by Sam's allusion to the past and to the future.

He recalled with a sigh the gray, windy morning, and the two lads in their heavy clogs and rough clothing, standing with their hands clasped, as they said to each other a long good-bye. And he thought, as he had frequently done before, that Sam was right enough about its being time to look after the next world a bit, and that if he could possibly manage it he would begin going to church the next Sunday morning. Then he dipped his pen into the ink and wrote:—

DEAR OLD SAM: If thou has got my Joe to train up in the way he should go, thou has got something worth the training; and rather more work on thy hands than thou thinks for. But if thou can only make him mind thee, as well as thou used to make me mind thee, thou may happen turn out as steady a going man as thyself. As to 'prentice fees, I'm glad thou doesn't expect me to pay thee one, for I should have to disappoint thee. When Joe is doing good work, get one from him: he can afford it, I'm sure, and he will get to see into the value of thy teaching better if he has to pay for it.

I didn't send him to thy school, and it's not very likely I will pay for thy fees. I'm astonished as thou should waste time and trouble asking me about such a thing. I hope Joe will be more of a comfort to thee than he seems to have been to any one else yet. His wife called to see me yesterday. She is a woman that any man might be proud of; how Joe can bide to leave her and stay with thee for two years is one of them things as would cap any body in their senses.

Thine, dear Sam,
AMOS BRAITHWAITE.

Having read over the letter and found it to his satisfaction, he sealed and posted it, and then went home and dressed himself for his visit to Bradley Court. All the way there he was in a state of suppressed exaltation, and though far too prudent and proud to show his amazement, the beautiful park and gardens, the fine house, the silver and servants and general grandeur, affected him very strangely.

To think how Bradley had hated him! And now he had a kind of proprietorship in all that he had owned! And surely if Bradley had often set him in Cold-Shoulder Lane, Joe had paid back that snubbing very effectually by setting Edith in the same place for a term of two years at a time. Upon the whole his bill

of offences against his old enemy was getting a very full and satisfactory settlement.

He told Edith that he had had a letter from Samuel Yorke, but he did not show it to her. Sam had a free way of speaking to him, a habit of reproof, which he thought might be a bad example to set before Mrs. Joe. He was very desirous to stand well with his new daughter; so he only told her what pleasant promises Yorke had made about Joe, and how certain he was that Joe's queer notion would turn out to be the wisest notion he had.

Edith's first consultation with her father-in-law was in respect to the prevention of any general public discussion of their family affairs. "Joe has left me, father," she said, feelingly, "and there is nobody but you to take care of my good name."

"It will be a bad move for any one tnat says a wrong word o' thee," he answered. "I'll give them it that well that they won't know where to hide themselves."

"What shall we say about Joe's long absence?"

"Say? Say the truth, my lass; truth may be blamed, but it never can be shamed. Say

that Joe was disgusted with t' law, and weary to death o' doing nothing. Say that he wanted to learn some straightforward, interesting trade, that he could mak' a bit o' money by, and that he hes gone to his godfather to learn it. Surely to goodness, there's naught wrong in that! I'd like to see t' man as thinks there is, that's all! He'd come to a varry different opinion in a minute or two, I think."

"People will say, why did he not go to his father?"

"Tell them his fayther wouldn't hev him; and if they want to know any more of thy business send 'em to me, for t' information. I sall enjoy giving it to them, varry much."

"And as long as Joe is away I am under your protection, father?"

"I sud say thou art. And I'll tak' good care of thee; see if I don't."

"Every week I shall ride over to Bevin Hall to see you; and every Saturday you will come to Bradley to see me."

Amos fidgetted and looked uneasy at the proposal.

"Why, ta sees, there is no woman body at Bevin; Martha Thrale went into a tantrum wi'

me about Joe, and when Joe took himsen off she went with him. I hevn't bothered mysen about women since, nor about t' house either. If I keep Bevin Mill spick and span it suits me well enough, and I don't bother mysen about t' house. I sud rather think it is in a bad state; t' mice and t' moths hev been heving it to themselves, and there isn't a room in it fit for a lady like thee."

"Poor Martha! I am afraid I made it almost impossible for Joe to show her the least affection or remembrance."

"He shouldn't hev let thee hinder him; I wouldn't. Martha was good to Joe. It was a bit mean of thee to come between them."

"Every hour reveals some new thing in which I wasn't fair or kind to Joe."

"I sudn't wonder. If a woman iver does get her eyes opened to her awn faults, she's varry likely to see into things that will keep her on t' stool of repentance a long time. I don't say that Joe is without faults; he behaved varry badly to me. But still, I hev no doubt thou aggravated him into doing lots of things it wasn't Joe Braithwaite's nature to do."

"But I will be kind and gentle now, father."

"I hev no doubt. Thou wouldn't find it easy to be cross wi' me, Mrs. Braithwaite. Joe was too good natured. He just led thee into temptation. No woman can resist t' pleasure o' ruling her husband, when he puts t' reins and whip in her hand. And what comes o' women ruling? Sin and sorrow, Mrs. B., sin and sorrow allus."

CHAPTER XII.

AT BRADLEY.

"A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows."

"The primal duties shine aloft like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of men like flowers."

"One in whom persuasion and belief had ripened into faith."

MORAL energy is never a failure; but when Joe came to realize his position he was a little amazed at the result of his godfather's prompt acceptance of his regret for an unsatisfactory past and his resolutions for a better future. He had really had no idea of such heroic treatment of his dissatisfaction. He had coquetted with the idea of going to his godfather for some months, and when the visit to Manchester was proposed he had determined to take the preliminary steps to a wiser and more independent life. But so rapid a

settlement of the affair had never occurred to him as possible.

He had expected to make some arrangement with Yorke, and then secure his wife's sanction to his plan. He wanted to get across the stream, but he had a sort of pleasure in lingering on the bank and anticipating the necessary plunge. He was a little angry at himself, for submitting to that peculiar, forceful something in his godfather's manner which had gone at once to the solution of his difficulty and taken him with it.

"I should have returned home again, at least for a month," he thought. "There are things Edith will need some advice about; and I have only put her more than ever under the influence of Perkins. And I ought to see and talk with her on my plan, and I did not bring my wardrobe and books with me, and certainly I do not like the idea of being always under the eye of that old man. He is too masterful. I must have some different arrangement with him. The whole affair has been settled in too great a hurry."

But when the old man called at five o'clock and said, "Now then, Joe, pick up thy valise,

my lad. If we don't be sharp we'll keep dinner waiting," Joe had no power to enter the protest he was thinking of. And though he felt worried, and even a little cross, it was impossible to show his temper to one so genuinely kind, so placidly unconscious of having caused worry or annoyance.

They stopped at a large brick house in the suburbs of the great city. It stood in a small, shady garden, and the garden was surrounded by a brick wall. Great solid gates admitted them to its seclusion, and before they could ring the bell the door was opened by a young girl, who said, as Yorke removed his hat, "Dinner is ready to serve, sir."

"Then tell Polly to hev it served. Come, Joe, a bit o' dinner will mak' a new man o' thee."

He led him into a large, comfortable dining-room, handsomely furnished with the solid woods and heavy moreen that were fashionable forty years ago. The windows were open, but a little fire burned cheerfully above the bright steel hearth furnishings; and the table, though small, was laid with the utmost nicety and care. Joe's cover appeared as if by magic. If

he had not been observant, he would have supposed that he had been expected.

"Sit tha down at t' table; thou won't hev to wait;" and with the words the door opened, and a most pleasant-looking woman, about fifty years old, entered, She wore a black stuff dress, and a snow-white cap and apron; her round, rosy face was beaming with smiles, and in her hands she carried a platter with a cut of fresh salmon on it; it was boiled to perfection, and laid upon white damask and fresh curled parsley.

"There, now, Master Yorke! I do hope as you and the young gentleman hev brought good appetites with you. A bit o' fish like that is made for good men and good eaters."

"We'll be varry apt to do our duty, Polly; hes all gone well to-day?"

"As well as could be expected, sir, with giddy young girls in t' house, and a pottering owd man in t' yard and t' garden."

"They do middling well—with thee—Polly."

"Thank you, sir." The words were accompanied by a little courtesy, and Polly withdrew, leaving one of the giddy young girls to wait on the table and bring in the meat and dessert.

As Joe soon found out, this conversation, slightly varied according to the initial dish of the meal, was an every-day event. And he got to feel, as Yorke evidently did, that Polly's handsome, happy face, and her cordial recommendation, imparted a kind of relish to all the food her clever hands prepared.

The whole dinner was excellent, and Yorke was pleased to see that Joe enjoyed it. "A man who doesn't care for a good dinner, Joe, doesn't care about lots of other good things. I hevn't much opinion o' him," said Yorke, as he rose with a face full of content from the table. Then he took from a rack in the chimney corner a clean, long clay pipe, and, having filled it, sat silently smoking, while every trace of dinner was quickly and quietly removed. Joe had declined the pipe, but he lit a cigar, and for half an hour the two men enjoyed that delightful, dreamy repose which good viands and good tobacco, and a companionship unexacting and sympathetic, seem to have the power to give.

By and by, when Joe's cigar was finished, and Yorke had tapped the ashes out of his

first pipe, and was lingeringly refilling the bowl, he began to talk.

"I like a bit o' quiet after dinner, Joe; and I thought we hed best begin as we would be apt to carry on."

"I enjoyed it very much."

"But now thou can talk. I shall like to hear thee talk now. I heard thou was a year among t' foreigners. Tell us summat about thy travels."

This was a subject Joe liked to talk about. He took his godfather from city to city, and the time went by unheeded. The old man was charmed. He had seen nothing of life beyond Bradford and Manchester; he listened as a child listens to a fairy story. Insensibly the room darkened, till there were only the gray shadows of twilight, and the ruddy, fitful blaze of the coal fire. Joe had been talking about Rome, and the great church of St. Peter.

"And did ta really go into a popish church, Joe! why, howiver did ta feel about it?"

"I will tell you. One night I went to the Sistine Chapel. It was after midnight, just before the dawning of Easter Sunday. They

were singing what they call the Miserere. At each verse a light was put out, and as the darkness grew deeper the music became sadder and sadder, until I could scarcely endure the sorrowful wail. But when every light had been put out, when thick darkness had fallen upon the kneeling congregation, then a voice began to sing; such a voice, godfather; alone, clear, triumphant; it sang the power of the God of Resurrection; and then the lights suddenly blazed forth, and the whole people rose to their feet, and I could not think of any thing to say, but 'Glory, glory be to God!'"

The tears were in Joe's eyes, and Yorke's face was shining with the rapture of his own anticipations. "My word, Joe," he said in a low, soft voice, "I would like to hear a hymn like that; I'd go to Rome to hear it, I would that."

They were silent for a few minutes, and then a maid brought in lights, and a tray with tea, and Yorke said: "Phœbe, thou tell Polly to hev t' room above this one got ready for Mr. Braithwaite." Then turning to Joe—"We are early birds here, my lad. I sall hev thee called on t' stroke of seven. That is a work-

ing-man's hour. I hope tha isn't afraid o' work."

"Not I."

"Nor ashamed o' it."

"Why should I be ashamed of it? I'm not any better than you, or my father."

"And depend upon it, Joe, labor is the varry salt of life. I won't hear tell o' it being a curse. Before iver 'Adam sinned, when he was first put i' Paradise, he was commanded to dress and keep it. The Lord works for us all. T' angels run to and fro, doing His will continually. Ivery man ought to be wisely busy; and I'll tell thee what, any father that works hard, in order that his children may hev nothing to do, is working hard to mak' them as miserable as they can be."

"I believe it all, sir, but—"

"Now, Joe, don't thee get weak-hearted."

"I was thinking of my wife and child."

"To be sure; thou is right to think o' them, but they can't help thee in what ta wants to do, and they would be varry sure to hinder thee. For two years thou must stick to thy work. I'll hev naught to do wi' thee, if ta is going to run between Bradley and Manchester.

It must be one thing or t' other. Thou wilt hev to fill posts where ta can't be absent."

"You mean that I am not to go to Bradley for two years."

"That is about what I mean. Thou can't serve two masters; is it to be thy wife, or Samuel Yorke?"

"Men generally manage to do their duty to both wife and business."

"Thine is a particular case, Joe. Because most rivers slope gently to t' sea, that doesn't prevent Niagara taking a leap of a hundred and fifty feet. Come, Joe, I am doing t' right thing for thee, ivery way. Tak' my way for two years, and then thou can tak' thy way for all t' rest o' thy life; if ta doesn't tak' my way, thou art going to mak' a mess of t' whole affair, and I'll hev naught to do with it."

There was something irresistible about the man. After a moment's pause, Joe said: "I will do as you think best."

They were walking up-stairs together as Joe came to this decision. Yorke was much pleased with it. He went with Joe into the room prepared for him, and said, with a sigh,

"It was William Henry's room; tha' sees I

hevn't moved a thing. And I'm glad I hevn't; he was a good, kind lad, and I think he'd like to know thou wert comfortable in it. Good night, Joe. We sall hev some happy hours together, I can see that."

Certainly Joe was not very happy at that hour. He had to tell Edith, and it was only after many efforts he succeeded in writing her the few lines she received the night she was so lovingly expecting him home. But when this letter was written and posted the difficulty of Joe's new life was over. For to the strong the irrevocable brings strength. Come what might, he would now stand to the position he had taken.

And for the first few weeks his business life was not altogether a pleasant one. The weather was damp and oppressive, and after his country life the dense crowds in Dean's Gate, profligate and miserable, sickened him. The old church, with its lonely yard, and its great square tower, blackened by the smoke of every factory chimney ever built in Manchester, made his heart pitiful. He wished the lank, white spinners, sodden with the vapor of the mills, and husky with the dust of the cotton

devils, could at least once a week worship amid green fields. And he thought of Bevin Church, with the trees whispering round it, and the bells ringing psalms above it, and the hands coming over the windy wolds to pray within its white walls.

As for Market street, he was lost amid its hurry and bustle, its rush and tumble. The enormous lurries with their gigantic horses and sulky brutes of drivers made him glad to get within the lesser confusion, and the less evident hostility, of his godfather's mill. And very soon he became interested in his work, and so weary with it that he found, as Yorke had predicted, no inclination to go beyond the limits of his daily needs and duties.

But these results could hardly be foreseen in Bradley and Market-Bevin, and both Edith and Amos Braithwaite had many anxious hours the following week. After the father-in-law's visit Edith answered Joe's letter. And the answer did the very best side of her nature credit. She frankly confessed her faults ; she assured Joe of her unalterable affection. She praised the spirit which had dared to face his mistakes and disappointments, and declared,

"By so doing, dear Joe, you have put your feet upon your ill-fortune and made yourself master of your fate. I have never before been so proud of you, never before loved you half so well."

Then she told him of her visit to Aunt Martha and to his father, and of the latter's promise to take dinner with her the following day. "And I hope you will be glad that baby's name is settled," she said, "for when Aunt Martha saw him she instinctively called him little Joe, and I am sure he can have no better name than your own."

That first week Edith did not go over to Bevin Hall; she had perceived that it would be inconvenient to Amos, and she did not wish to associate herself with any thing troublesome to his daily life. But about Thursday she rode over to Leeds again, and induced Martha Thrale to come back with her to Bradley for a week. Martha was very glad to go. Her arms had been aching to hold the child once more. She had begun to wish she knew Edith better, for she desired to love her as Joe's wife ought to be loved by her.

On Saturday morning Edith thought it best

to tell her that Amos was coming to dinner. She was aware that they had not spoken to each other for nearly eight years. She understood the stubborn temper of both, and she did not suppose Martha would wish to meet her brother-in-law. "But if not, Aunt Martha," she said, "do not leave your rooms; I would not for the world have you suffer any annoyance in my house."

"That's all right, Edith," she replied; "but I can tell you one thing. I niver yet run away from either man or woman body, and I'm partic'larly sure that I won't run from Amos Braithwaite. If he doesn't like to be in t' same room wi' me he can just tak' himsen further off, as soon as iver he chooses."

"I dare say that he will be very glad to meet you again, Aunt Martha. He ought to be."

"Ay, he ought. I did him a deal o' good for many a year. He has mebbe found it out by this time. And he hes nothing to feel hard at me for, except that one night I told him t' truth about himsen, and if he didn't like it it was nobody's fault but his awn. He had no one to blame but Amos Braithwaite, if t' truth wasn't varry flattering."

So on Saturday the proud old lady sat steadily in the parlor with her knitting, her broad, placid, handsome face showing not a trace of any thing but sincerity and content. Amos came bustling into the room in his usual pompous fashion, and his eyes instantly fell upon Martha, as she sat by the open window, busy with a sock of pink wool for little Joe. It was like a vision from his old life. In a moment he remembered all the years in which she had kept Bevin Hall a little palace of sweet cleanliness and exquisite comfort. His heart went out to her, but he only said,

"Well, I'm sure; is that thee, Martha?"

"Ay, it's me, Amos, wi a difference o' eight years fash and worry and ageing. I'm glad to see thee looking so well and so like thysen."

"Is ta really? Martha Thrale, when is ta coming home? Thou ought to be ashamed o' thysen, leaving an old man like me to fettle for himsen a' these years."

"I hevn't done a thing or said a word that I'm shamed for, niver in my whole life, Amos Braithwaite."

"I sud think that t' Resurrection Day was

here, if I heard thee say different. It's natural to hear thee talking like that. It would be a strange thing to hear thee say as thou could be in the wrong. It would that. But I'll tell thee summat: t' rats, and t' mice, and ivery other kind o' vermin that thou hates, are heving a good time over at Bevin, among t' velvet chairs and t' hangings and t' varry best carpets. And that owd Tabby Askweth hes broke t' last bit o' thy sister Ann's best china, and I don't believe there is an ell o' ta fine table damask left."

"Amos Braithwaite! Such carryings on! It's enough to make any body cry; Tabby Askweth ought to be in Bevin lock-up, that she ought."

"And I hevn't t' ways, nor t' means, to ask my awn daughter-in-law to come and drink a cup o' tea wi' me. It's a shame, I say."

"It is thy awn fault."

"And I'd like to see my awn grandson, sometimes, in my awn house. Thou ought to think o' these things. Come home, my woman; I wouldn't be so stubborn and ill to move for any thing. Look at me; see how forgiving I hev been. Why, I was too soft even to tell

Joe's wife a bit o' my mind. Thou'rt worse than I am, Martha."

"Does ta want me to come back to Bevin? Is that what ta means?"

"Ay, I want thee to come home."

"Then I'll come, on one condition. Thou must ask Joe back. I left when Joe left, and I'm none comin' back till ta asks Joe back wi' me."

"I'll do naught o' t' sort. He can come if he likes. Edith is coming once a week, and if a man can't follow his wife, I count nothing of him; he's too big a fool to ask. When will ta come home, Martha?"

"As soon as I hev put my furniture in safe keeping."

"Sell it."

"Not I. Thee and me might get to differing again, and I'm not goin' to put mysen out of a home. I'd be too much i' thy power, if I sold my furniture."

"Thou art eat up wi' pride, but I'll set thee an example, Martha. I'll show thee how to be generous and forgiving. I'll settle £200 a year on thee for life; whether ta stays wi' me, or

leaves me, thou shalt hev £200 a year. What does ta say to that, now?"

"I niver asked thee for a penny-piece, Amos Braithwaite, and I don't know as thou hest any right to give me £200 a year."

"Keep thysen cool, Martha; I'm not offering thee any charity. Thou earned all I offer thee, ay, over and over. I'm nobbut paying a just debt."

"If thou thinks of it that way, pay it. But I'm not the woman to take any mean advantage over thee. I'm more likely to stay wi' thee, when I hev t' power to leave thee, than I would be if I hadn't a penny."

"When will ta come home?"

"Next Saturday thou wilt find me there, I'll warrant, when ta comes from t' mill."

Then Edith came in, and as the trio stood together admiring little Joe, the door opened, and Perkins entered. He was quite taken down by the presence of Amos and Martha, and could scarcely manage to explain that he was passing, and had called to see if there was any thing for him to attend to, etc.

Amos watched his confusion with cynical pleasure. "Why, whativer is t' matter wi'

thee, Perkins? Thou isn't thysen at all. Thou art blushing like a hobbledehoy! Doesn't t' company here suit thee? For my part I'm varry glad to see thee. I have summat to say to thee after dinner."

"Dinner is served, madam," said a servant.

"Then come thou wi' me, Edith. I can trust Joshua Perkins with Martha Thrale. He'll hev to mind his P's and Q's if he is thinking o' cross-questioning her. I'm glad Martha is here. I like to eat my dinner without racking my brain to keep upsides wi' a clever owd lawyer."

"Oh, Mr. Braithwaite! Mr. Braithwaite! You must hev your joke, we all know that." And Perkins tried to hide his astonishment and annoyance in a forced laugh, and in civil attentions to Miss Thrale, who, however, received them in an unusually silent and haughty manner.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOE RISES IN ESTEEM.

The soul gives itself strict account of every thing;
It penetrates itself with its own life.

That love never confers happiness on others
that sacrifices nothing for those whom it loves.

"NOW then, Perkins, if ta hes any questions to ask, thou may git all ta can out o' me."

The two men were walking and smoking in the beautiful alleys of the rose garden, it being a theory of Edith's that in some way tobacco was favorable to the health of her favorite flower. Two world-worn figures they looked, amid the unspeakable freshness and loveliness which surrounded them; but Amos was not insensible to it. He loved flowers, he loved roses best of all flowers, and as he invited the lawyer's examination, he stood still a moment before a wonderful white moss rose, a thing so purely,

so heavenly sweet and perfect, that it compelled the eyes to pause and the heart to worship.

"Well, Mr. Braithwaite—"

"Ay, thou hed better call me Mr. Braithwaite, I am got to where it's t' right thing to do. A man wi' t' overcharge o' Bevin and Bradley on his mind, deserves a bit o' respect, I think."

"Did I understand you to say that you had the charge of the Bradley estate, sir?"

"I'm not going to mell in thy business, so thou need not look so turkey-gobbler like. I'm taking my daughter's place, not thine. That is, I'm taking Joe's place; and, I must say, not a minute before t' right time. There's four houses on Kattal Moor unlet for two years; now then, how does that come about?"

"If you hev any right to ask—"

"To be sure I hev, did ta iver know me bother my head about other folks' concerns? But if ta wants to, thou can draw me up a power of attorney."

"Then I answer that I cannot force people to rent houses. They are there, if they want them."

"But thou could do summat to mak' people

want them. Tell Darley to tak' his paint pots there, to-morrow, and hev t' garden palings put up, and t' flower beds weeded, and t' window glass put in; mak' them look comfortable, and they'll rent; I'll be bound they will!"

"All this costs money."

"I should say it did; but ta must put money out to get money in. Them houses standing empty are a loss of £80 a year. Thou hed better put out £10 and get £70 back. But thou art so used to getting good money for talking a bit that it's hard to get t' right principles of outlay and increase into thy head—there's more o' t' same kind too. That mill on Sorbey beck has been empty for five years."

"I hev niver hed one offer for it."

"As a mill; that's likely; but I'll tell thee what! T' Wesleyan Methodists want a chapel at Sorbey—I know they do, for they came to me for a subscription. Offer them t' building on a long lease. They'll nobbut hev to put t' seats in and paint it up a bit. Give 'em their own terms, if they are any way near t' figure."

"That is a good idea, Mr. Braithwaite."

"Ay, I think it is. I mostly know what I'm doing. And, I don't want a mill there; it

wont suit my plans. If they say t' building is too big, thou may tell them that ta knows there will be plenty o' men and women to crowd it before varry long."

"Whativer does ta mean?"

"I understand my awn meaning, which is more than many folks do. Now, thet is all about Bradley at this time, only I'd advise thee to keep a sharper lookout for Bradley, for I'll tell thee one thing, I sall keep a varry sharp lookout for thee."

Perkins laughed, but not very pleasantly. "I know what your lookout is, Mr. Braithwaite. I'm not a bit afraid of it. What is all this I hear about Mr. Joe?"

"What has ta heard?"

"That he hed deserted his wife and child. I heard also that you hed followed him to Liverpool, but could not induce him to come home."

"Thou hes been fooled wi' a pack o' lies. Who told them to thee?"

"I am not at liberty to name names."

"Ay, but ta will hev to name names to me. We aren't going one step further till ta does." And Amos was so red and belligerent-looking that Perkins thought it wisest to answer:

"If you insist on knowing, it was Tommy Arncliff of t' Bell Ringer's Inn."

"I'll sue him for defamation o' my son's character. Thou may lay t' damages at £10,000."

"Nonsense, Braithwaite. It isn't slander saying what you've heard to your lawyer. I'm Arncliff's lawyer. I could not, and would not, be witness against him."

"Hes ta heard any one else say such things?"

"I'm not varry likely to tell thee now what I hev heard. But it is easy to see that there is something more than usual at Bradley, and of course people, knowing how I stand to Bradley, will ask me questions. I think it's only fair that I should know how to answer them."

"Now thou talks common sense. If any one asks thee where Mr. Joe is, tell them he is with his godfather, Samuel Yorke of Spinning-Jenny street, Manchester. They'll mebbe ask, too, why he is there, and ta can tell them he hes gone to learn Yorke's business. Thou can add thet his awn family approve all he hes done, and thet I hev promised to tak' his place as far as I can, till he gets through his 'prenticeship. If they want to know any

more, send 'em to me. I'm none too old to thresh a few ideas into their bones, that won't go in through their ears. You hev to lick wisdom into some folks, there's no other way."

"Mrs. Braithwaite, at any rate, seems quite happy and satisfied."

"Mrs. Braithwaite is an extraordinary woman, sir. How owd Bradley iver came to have such a daughter caps me. She must hev taken after t' mother. And Mrs. Braithwaite is quite set up with her husband's energy, and his determination to go in for making money."

"Still, you can't help people wondering why Mr. Joe did not go to his own father, if he wanted to be a spinner."

"Nobody can help being born meddlers and foolish busybodies. Does ta think I want another woolen mill so near my own? Does ta think I want my son for a business rival? Does ta think I want to hear old customers say, 'If ta can't let me hev this yarn at such a figure, I sall go to thy son for it?' But a cotton mill! That is thread of a different color. I'd like to hev a cotton mill about as far off as Bradley. It won't do me a mite o' harm. It

will be rather a good thing for my property; it'll raise t' price of it, and I hev, as ta knows, a goodish bit o' property in that direction."

"Mr Braithwaite, give me your hand. You are the most far-seeing and sensible man I happen to hev among my clients and acquaintances. I respect you, sir."

"I thought ta would choose to find out t' truth about me, someday or other. Now we'll walk a bit down t' park. I want to hev a talk wi' thee about it." Rather reluctantly Perkins acquiesced. He did not relish this interference, but if Amos was acting for the lady of the manor he was in no way over-stepping his power; and it became Perkins' duty to listen to his instructions. Still, Amos was undoubtedly irritating. He was not conscious of his authoritative air, nor of that excessive faithfulness to Edith's interests which was natural to the newness of his relationship to her; but Perkins was conscious of it. In his heart he was calling him very uncomplimentary things as they returned from their walk.

It was then twilight, and they met Edith in the hall as they entered it.

"Go into the parlor, Mr. Perkins," she

said; "we shall have tea directly; and, Father, you must please come with me a few minutes."

She put her arm through that of Amos and took him with her up the stairway. Perkins stood a moment, watching with amazement and some scorn, the old man's excessive politeness, and the air of pride and satisfaction which he unconsciously betrayed. Then he sat down in the parlor, and watched the footman bring in some exquisite tea-cups of royal Worcester upon a silver salver. He reflected, that though he had frequently taken tea at Bradley, the royal Worcester had never been brought out in his honor. The circumstance, slight as it was, gave him the key of the position. It was evident Amos had come to Bradley as a favored ruler, and that it would be to his interest to indorse all that Amos desired. Since he could not supersede him, the next best move was to work with him.

In the mean time Edith had taken Amos to a large, lovely room, profusely ornamented, and draped with pale pink. In the very center of it stood a little cot, a drift of snowy linen and lace, and fast asleep within it the loveliest of

babies. He had had his bath, and been dressed in fresh lawn, and then gone to rest so perfectly happy that he diffused around him a balmy feeling of blissful and beautiful repose.

"Look at little Joe, father!"

"My word! Hey, Edith, he is a beauty!"

And the proud mother, and equally proud grandfather, stood silent a few minutes before the small monarch, and then tip-toed themselves gently out of his presence. The innocent babe, the lovely mother, the shrewd, world-worn old man—what telling contrasts they unconsciously made! Nor were they without some influence, upon each other, for as they came quietly down stairs Edith slipped her hand into her father's hand, and thus, to Perkins' wonderment, they entered the room together.

After tea, Perkins rose to depart. "Take a seat in my gig," said Amos. "We'll tie thy horse behind it."

"Father, you are surely not going to Bevin to-night?"

"Why, yes, my lass. I niver thought of any other thing but going back to-night."

"But I must go to church to-morrow; I was

not there last Sunday, and I really can not go unless you go with me."

"Oh, but ta knows, I niver go to church. I hev got out of t' way of such doings. Aunt Martha will go wi' thee, I'll warrant."

"I shall go to t' Wesleyan Chapel, Amos. It is thy place to go wi' Edith. I don't see how ta can get off going."

Perkins was listening with an amused face to this discussion, and his smile decided Amos. "Very well," he answered. "I'll go; I'm t' right person to go, I dare say, and there's varry few that wouldn't like to be in my place, I'm sure."

So Perkins rode home alone, and the next morning Amos escorted his daughter-in-law to Bradley Church. They made a little sensation when they entered, for Amos Braithwaite was a well-known man, even far beyond Bradley. And he was, also, a much respected man. His public and commercial character stood very high, and his domestic and religious character was so comfortably negative that no one felt compelled to regard him through it.

Perhaps the service did not do him much good, as it only intensified his complacent sat-

isfaction with himself; but he paid scrupulous attention to it, and he left a golden token of his presence in the offertory plate, which was gratifying to the church-wardens. As he was coming out of church, while waiting in the crowded porch for the Bradley carriage, he had one of those small social triumphs to which he was keenly sensitive. The Hon. Mr. Latrays, M. P., for whose election Amos had done a great deal, came forward and accosted him with much apparent pleasure. Edith asked the stranger to dinner, and the invitation was at once accepted; and it is certain that things of far greater importance would not have given Amos half the pleasure that driving away with the M. P. by his side did.

It was a Sunday full of satisfaction to him. Mr. Latrays remained all night at Bradley, and on Monday morning went back to Bevin with Amos, in order to examine some improvements in the machinery of Bevin mill. They had had long and delightful discussions on all the subjects so perennially interesting to men of the world. Amos had done himself justice, and been complimented on his daughter and grandson, and almost extravagantly so upon

the extraordinary self-denial of his energetic son.

"How few men in England, owning a place like this," said Mr. Latrays, with a grand sweep of his white hand—"how few would ever have thought of learning the working-man's needs and feelings by entering personally into his labors and limitations. Your son will make an irresistible Radical candidate, sir, I assure you."

This was a view of Joe's conduct which had never before struck his father, but he immediately recognized its importance, though he contented himself with looking wise and sympathetic, and saying nothing. For he remembered that Perkins had once spoken of Joe running on the Radical side of politics, and he admitted to himself that Perkins was a far-seeing man, with a faculty of allying himself with good fortune, and drifting towards successful sides.

Aunt Martha's departure followed close on that of Amos. She had determined to sell her furniture and go back to Bevin Hall. "I lived with him twenty years, and I can live with him twenty more," she said to Edith. "Besides, I

hev thee to help me, now, and when thou says yes he seems to hev forgotten how to say no, though contradiction used to be natural as breathing to him."

"And you will not be so lonely, Aunt Martha, for little Joe and I will come every week to see you; and also you will be among all your old acquaintances at Market-Bevin."

"I have been a bit lonely, sometimes," said Martha.

"And in any dispute I shall always agree with you. When there are two women against one man, he can't impose very much on either of them."

"As to that, it's mebbe better to hev one man ordering around than to hev to fight for your own with ivery penny tradesman you deal wi'. I hev hed a hard time wi' butchers, and grocers, and milkmen. At Bevin they know they'll hev to settle wi' Amos, and they're particular both as to quality and quantity. Bless your heart, Edith, there's no one in this world more to be pitied than a lone woman trying to mak' her awn living. If she's clever, all the fools hate her; if she isn't clever, then they cheat her. I've seen worse folks than Amos

Braithwaite since I began to tak' lodgers, and I'm not sorry to be going back to Bevin."

"When may I come and see you there?"

"I sud think a week from next Wednesday, I sall hev some comfartable place for thee."

But Martha found things much worse than she had expected. The whole house had to be refurnished, and she was astonished to find that Amos took quite eagerly to the idea. He took pleasant counsel with the two women about it, and let Edith drive him here and there in search of papers, and damasks, and new ornaments. In a few weeks the old house was thoroughly renovated and refurnished, and Edith could go there and drink tea in as handsome a parlor and out of as exquisite china as at Bradley. And it was wonderful how easily and naturally one improvement brought on another, until the garden, the stables, and even the wardrobe of Amos, showed the feminine influence to which he had been gradually subjected.

In the same interval, Joe and Edith were getting into closer sympathy with each other than they had ever before known. Long, loving letters, in which each told the other, not

only the minutest incidents of their daily lives, but also their struggles with discouragements, weariness, their longings, resolves, successes and failures; led them gradually to understand how much of nobility there had been in each heart, unguessed by the other. Every such letter was a link of the chain binding them more closely together. They grew familiar with each other, accustomed to saying affectionate words, not ashamed to confess how sadly they had undervalued their past, how eagerly they looked forward to their future. Joe was as anxious for his letters as the most eager lover, and though Samuel Yorke had been quite right in saying that Joe would be too tired to want any thing but his bed at night, he nevertheless found writing to his wife as refreshing as sleep.

After a while, Edith began to read portions of Joe's letters, describing his life and work, to Amos as he smoked his pipe by the parlor fire, or strolled with her in the garden after dinner. They were certainly very fine letters, and both the wife and father grew to wonderfully respect the writer. Edith always praised them extravagantly; Amos said very little, but

as he stroked his chin complacently he congratulated himself upon having such a remarkably clever son.

One day, Joe had been sent to Liverpool to buy cotton. He had gone frequently with his godfather, but this time he had been trusted to use his own judgment. The result had been very satisfactory; and Joe's letter described so vividly the cotton exchange, with its crowd of eager merchants and cautious buyers, that Edith could not wait for her usual visit. She ordered her carriage and went at once to Bevin Hall.

It was the middle of the afternoon when she got there, and Amos was at the mill. But there was Martha, always ready to hear and to believe any wonderful thing of Joe. And baby's ailments and baby's intelligence had to be discussed anew, and some newly furnished spare bed-rooms to be admired, and thus the time passed very pleasantly until Amos came home.

Amos was much impressed by the letter, for he knew, if Yorke trusted Joe to buy cotton, he had great reliance on his abilities, and the witty, pithy descriptions of life and character

interested him very much. When Edith had left, he remained a long time silent, occasionally lifting his eyes to Martha, who was busy hemming some of the fine damask just bought. Finally, he took his pipe from his mouth, and said:

"Martha, we hev been a bit in t' dark about Joe. He seems to be a varry unusual young man."

"Speak for thysen, Amos. I allays said Joe was a varry unusual young man. If he sud go to Parliament and sit at t' queen's right hand, I sud not feel a bit of surprise at it."

"Joe tak's after me a good deal. I used to hev just such ideas about men and things as he hes."

"Thee!"

"To be sure I hed. But I niver hed any education, and I couldn't write them down on paper, and I niver hed any one to talk to."

"Tell the truth, Amos. Thou wert far too busy making money to either write or talk; and if such thoughts iver did come into thy head, thou sent them packing to the tune of *£. s. d.* I'll warrant thou did."

"I say Joe takes after me Martha."

"Joe takes after his mother. He's got all t' talents he has from her."

"I say Joe takes after me."

"When he settles down to money-making, he will take after thee; not until then, Amos."

CHAPTER XIV.

CALUMNY.

"There's noan sa blind but they can see
Sum fawts i' other men;
I've sometimes met wi' folk 'at thought
They saw sum i' theirsen."

"Be thou chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny."

OCCUPATION is the best armor of the soul, and these affairs had kept Edith busy during the first weeks of her separation from Joe. At the very time when that fateful journey to Manchester took place, she had been trying to decide upon some plan for the summer. Joe had suggested Switzerland, and she had inclined to Scarborough. "We cannot go with less than three servants," she said, "and a baby and three servants in Switzerland will cost a great deal; besides, I think baby wants sea air." Joe had made no objections, and he had fully expected to share the summer's toilsome search after pleasure.

For though the Manchester scheme was in his mind, he had no idea of bringing it so suddenly and sharply into form and purpose; no idea that his plans were to finally determine those of his wife. But the first decision Edith came to, when she was left to her own decisions, was, that she must remain in her home. To wander about the continent without Joe was impossible, and she had no mind to brave the shrugs and suppositions and suspicions of a fashionable watering-place. Under her own roof, with such protection as her husband's relatives could give her, she felt sure no one would dare to interfere in her personal affairs or darken her good name.

Her very position made her fearless of offence on this ground. Over her manor, her sway was in a measure absolute. No one had ever presumed to discuss her doings. Even her marriage had provoked no adverse criticisms. She could scarcely imagine people interfering in her private affairs, much less making her in any way conscious that they had been guilty of such presumption.

And, in another way, Amos was quite as proud and comfortable. It was a well under-

stood thing in his circle that those who meddled with Amos Braithwaite would be apt to get more than they looked for. Amos never forgave such interferences, and he had arrived at a position which generally enabled him to make prompt and severe reprisals. If Luke Bradley had been alive in those days, he would have found a quarrel with Amos Braithwaite a very serious matter. So Amos, during these summer months, had gone on re-furnishing his house, and devoting all his spare hours to his daughter-in-law, without any idea that people were expressing themselves in no very flattering terms concerning them.

True, Perkins had told him what Arncliff had said, and even intimated that others had ventured on similar opinions; but Amos had understood that all such adverse criticism referred to Joe; and he was not very sure but Joe deserved it; though he always concluded such a private admission with the muttered threat—"Let me hear tell o' them saying aught against Joe. My word! but I'll mak' 'em sorry for it."

However, when the summer was over, when the rector and his wife returned from Norway,

and Lady Wilson from the Rhine, and Lady Charlton from the Scotch Highlands, and other lesser social lights from the English watering places, it was not long before Edith was compelled to notice how far she had fallen in the sight of such exclusives. She had never been a popular woman, most of her social equals had little scores against her, and they did not think it unpleasant to have such a good excuse for settling them. How skilful women are in such retaliations most people have had opportunities to discover.

And, as it happened, the first Sunday when Edith met all these adverse critics in church, was just the very first Sunday Amos had been prevented from accompanying her. She had become by this time so accustomed to Joe's absence that it had ceased to be a matter of consideration with her how it affected others than herself. She had not even now the slightest objection to appear in her pew alone. She was perfectly satisfied with the position and prospects of her affairs, and she had quite forgotten, or quite ignored, the fact that society considered she owed some explanation, perhaps even some apology to it, for circum-

stances so unusual. As soon as she entered church that Sabbath morning, she was aware of an antagonistic feeling; for spiteful and contemptuous women contrive to charge the very atmosphere with their ill-will; though how they do so is one of those spiritual miracles science is not yet able to explain. Yet, as she walked with a certain majesty of carriage up the aisle, she felt the evil influence rained upon her from eyes full of dislike and contempt, and through the solemn litany she was aware that the women so glibly calling themselves miserable sinners were thinking of her as the self-complacent Pharisee thought of the publican.

Coming out of church, the rector's wife was the first of her own set whom she encountered. She was an admirable woman, of fine family and exceedingly proper opinions; too just to altogether condemn Edith without adequate hearing; too polite to positively snub a person who met her with congratulations and pleasant hopes. But she dropped her short sentence as if each word had been iced, and turned away with an "excuse me," which palpably meant, "I consider your attentions something very like an impertinence."

Many eyes had watched this interview. It was rigidly copied by some, while others took it as a license for still more marked disapproval, so that the aisle and porch of Bradley Church was a place of intolerable humiliation to Edith that day.

"Oh, Joe, Joe!" she cried in the solitude to which her wounded feelings drove her,—"Oh, Joe, Joe, if you had been here!"

For long it was all she could say, all she could think of, if only Joe had been there. And it is in precisely such trials as these that women suffer without help. Even very good women, socially wronged and humiliated, do not feel as if they have any right to carry such troubles to the ear of God Almighty. A sort of false shame holds them back. "How can God care whether Mrs. A—— or Lady B—— speaks to me or not?" If Edith had put her thoughts into words, they would have been on that wise.

But God does care. No matter how small the thorn that hurts the feet of His child, He cares about the wound. He knows that it is precisely these small thorns that cause the bitterest, often the most depressing, suffering.

They fret, and rankle, and fester, and, perhaps without doing vital harm, how they can worry and annoy! If there is a positive wrong, there is the law for redress; but the glance of the half-shut eye, the withdrawn garment, the withheld hand, what legal skill can punish them? A coat of mail may defy the lance, but what armor is there against a thorn?"

So Edith chafed and suffered all that day, as she had never suffered in her life before. Yet, though she wrote a long letter to Joe, she had the wisdom and patience to say nothing of her trouble. Her heart ached for his love and his protection, but why should she ask him to leave plans and projects for their future which were full of profit and pleasure? Was it worth while trying to win the half-approval of people, evidently so ready and so pleased to condemn her? At least, they might have waited for her explanation. Then she grew angry, and asked herself why she should condescend to explain matters at all to her neighbors. They had nothing to do with her. She asked nothing from them. She would not trouble herself, and certainly she would not trouble Joe about their liking or their disliking.

Still, she did not sleep at all that night; and the whispering of evil thoughts about her made her ears tingle and her heart ache. For she saw the scornful faces and heard the cruel words that were beyond bodily sight and hearing. Something far more intangible than a bird of the air carries such intelligence, and sitting alone in her room that Sabbath Edith knew, as certainly as if she had been actually present, how her name and her affairs were thrown from one spiteful mouth to another.

It was a dreary day, also, one of those wet days which at the end of September are so unspeakably dreary. The servants who had been going out were disappointed, and they contrived to infuse some of their own discontent through all the house. In the evening there was a quarrel in the kitchen, which the butler had to call Edith to settle. Little Joe's nurse was crying with her share of it, and the child himself, missing some element of his usual satisfaction, cried a good deal also.

"What a perfectly wretched day it has been!" said Edith, as she at length recognized the fact that the whole cross, weary household had gone to sleep. "To-morrow morn-

ing, wet or fine, I shall go and tell father every thing. There is one comfort about him; he always knows what to do, and he is not afraid to do it."

The next morning was bright and lovely, with just a suspicion of frost in the air. Edith had partially recovered her mental strength and tone; and her rich and careful toilet was in sympathy with the mood of self-assertion which had followed her collapse of the previous day. For somehow the flowing silk and the long velvet mantle seemed but the materialization of the proud and resentful thoughts which made her carry herself with a haughty and almost defiant air.

When she arrived at Bevin Hall it was about noon. Since Martha's return there, Amos had gone back to his custom of having his dinner at that old-fashioned hour. "I had my dinner at twelve o'clock for fifty years, Martha," he said, "and it's nobbut natural I sud like it best." And as the arrangement permitted Martha to have the main household duties finished early in the day, Amos found his noon dinner gave general satisfaction.

A few minutes after Edith's arrival, he came

in dusty and hungry, and in one of his crossest moods.

"Oh," said Edith, rising up impetuously, "I am so glad to see you, father."

"Happen ta is, but, to tell t' truth, I'm none so glad to see thee at this time of t' day. My mind is full o' yarns and Israel Sutcliffe. Sutcliffe has been up to meanness, and I'll hev to teach him that honesty is t' best policy, even if a man thinks of it as low down as that."

"I am sorry you are busy, for I am in trouble, and I counted on your help."

"Why, then, folks that count on me aren't apt to find me worth naught. Whativer trouble is ta in now? Joe and thee again?"

"Father! Joe never gave me any trouble."

"Oh, he didn't! Then I'm far mistaken. I might hev known, though, thou would go back on me. That's what folks get, and deserve to get, who meddle with man and wife. Who's troubling thee, then? Perkins, I'll be bound. If it's him, he'd better take care; I'd like a fight wi' him, oncommon well."

"It is not Perkins, father. It is the rector's wife, and Lady Wilson, and Lady Charlton, and Mrs. Lumley, and Mrs. Pennington—"

"Will ta be quiet? What am I to do between thee and a lot o' women? I know a deal better than to touch a job o' that kind."

"But you must make them behave themselves, father."

Then Amos laughed with a heartiness that finally made both Martha and Edith join him. "Mak' t' rector's wife, and Sir Thomas Wilson's wife, and Major Pennington's wife, and Squire Lumley's wife behave themselves! Why, my lass, I niver managed to mak' my own wife do as I wanted her to do, and—"

"Thou had better say nothin' about my sister Ann, Amos."

"And how does ta think I can manage other men's wives? Thet is a bit o' wool above my spinning, Edith, or mebbe I'd like to try it."

"Listen, father." Then she described to him, as well as she could, the ordeal through which she had been made to pass on the previous day; and soon she saw from the gathering color in his face, and the quick, passionate flashes in his eyes, that he was catching fire at her anger.

He was eating his dinner as he listened, a process usually thought to induce kindly feel-

ing; but Amos rose from the table full of wrath. And when Edith added, with a look of reproachful love, "You see, father, it is partly your fault, because if you had been with me no one would have dared even an insulting glance—" Amos was deeply roused.

"My lass," he answered, "I'm sorry I didn't let ivery thing go, and tak' thee to church, as I sud hev done. And thou art right; I'll tak' varry good care neither man nor woman insults thee as long as I hev t' charge in Joe's place. Go thy ways home, and do just as thou hes allays done; and go wheriver ta likes to go, and leave t' rest to me. My word! If they want to talk badly about thee, they'll hev to pay a high figure for it—thet is, their husbands will, for I'll tak' it out o' them ivery way. I'll warrant I can mak' both a horse-whip and a lawyer's bill varry unpleasant things."

Then he went off to his mill again, and the man who was wanting time on his yarns, and the hands whose pieces had a flaw in them, had a bad settlement that afternoon with Amos.

That night he was unusually silent over his pipe, but Martha let him alone. She knew that sooner or later he would seek her advice.

About eight o'clock he sent a note to Perkins, and then he turned to her and said,

"Martha, thou ought to know what mak' of stuff is in women. What does ta think they hev been saying about our Edith?"

"Why then, Amos, I don't hev to guess what they hev been saying. Eliza Yates hes a sister living at Lady Charlton's; and Eliza heard a good bit from her."

"Does ta mind telling me?"

"Why, Amos, there's no good in repeating ill words."

"I'll be bound thou repeated them to Edith."

"No, I didn't. What does ta take me for? Does ta think thou hes a monopoly of all t' sense and kindness there is in this part o' Yorkshire? But if ta wants to know how women talk, I'll tell thee. One said there was no wonder that Edith and thee suited each other so well, two bad-tempered, self-willed tyrants that niver let poor Joe Braithwaite hev a thought o' his own nor a half-penny of his own to spend."

"They ought to be ashamed o' themselves! Such lies."

"They said, too, that thou hed driven Joe

from Bevin, and that Edith had driven him from Bradley."

"As if Joe was such a feather-weight fool as to be driven from pillar to post by an owd father and a young wife—he would deserve it."

"Driven from both places wi' tempers, and black looks, and ordering ways as no man could stand."

"Well then, aught else?"

"Ay, Jeremiah Wade hed told some one, who told Major Pennington, that he hed been in Samuel Yorke's factory, and hed seen Joe in a flannel shirt and blue apron, working like a common man—and his wife living in t' lap o' luxury, as they say—and such and such like."

"Well, then?"

"Oh, it's all nonsense. Ta knows Eliza heard some queer talk about thy friend Mr. Latrays being there so often; and Mr. Latrays hed said in a room full o' company at Sir Thomas Wilson's that he considered Mrs. Joe Braithwaite a most remarkably beautiful woman."

"Ay, that 'ud hurt 'em badly, no doubt. So she is! A most remarkably beautiful woman. Mr. Latrays thinks right. He things as I do. Joe hes my taste about women. So Mr. Lat-

rays said she was beautiful, right to their faces. He sall have my vote as long as I live."

"And ta sees, Amos, he kind o'slighted other ladies in praising her so much; and people thought it varry improper of him. It was foolish, I'll say that mysen."

"It was honest, and true, and friend-like. If Jack Latrays wants a thousand pounds for his next election, he can hev it."

"People thought his praise of her very improper, Edith being, they said, as good, or as bad as a deserted wife."

"Deserted wife, indeed! She's nowt of t' sort! I'll mak' them eat their own words, and it will be a meal as will mak' them a bit sick, I think. What else did they say?"

"Well, they gave thee thy character too. Lady Charlton thought there had been a mistake, and that Edith would hev done better if she hed married t' father instead of t' son. Oh, ta knows how they would talk, what's t' good of saying more?"

"No, thet's enough, I'm sure! Did ta hear tell of t' men saying either this or that?"

"Squire Lumley said Edith had a temper like that biting, kicking hunter of his that he calls

Satan, but I know how that comes. He hed too much wine at t' last Hunt Ball, and he spoke to Edith, and she said a few words to him that he well deserved from every woman. But he is taking it out of her to-day."

"Never mind! I'll tak' it out o' him to-morrow. He went off this summer about t' time Joe went, and he doesn't know, happen, that Edith hes me at her back. But I hev some paper o' his, and I know where to buy plenty more, and if he doesn't mind I'll hang a red flag out of his windows varry soon. Men that owe money should keep a civil tongue in their heads. I'll teach Lumley that lesson, if he niver learns another."

CHAPTER XV.

AMOS MAKES MORNING CALLS.

"And often I have heard defended,
Little said is soonest mended."

"Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike."—*Pope.*

"A generous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows."

"JOSHUA PERKINS, ESQ. DEAR SIR: Buy up for me ivery scrap of Squire Lumley's paper thou can get thy fingers on; and send thy clerk Jonas Sutcliffe to Bevin Mill to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. Let him bring some o' thy iegal cap and a pen and ink-horn with him. I want him to take down a few bits of conversation for me.

"Thine truly,
"AMOS BRAITHWAITE."

This message gave Perkins considerable food for thought; but he complied exactly with the requisition, reflecting, as he did so, that, as the service was an unusual one, he could charge it without reference to any customary rate. So,

at ten o'clock precisely, Jonas Sutcliffe, with the professional blue bag, was waiting at Bevin Mill such orders as Amos had to give him.

Amos was in his gig, and he bid Jonas take a seat beside him. "We are going to Charlton House," he said, "and I want thee ta tak' partic'lar notice of ivery word that is passed. I'll mebbe put thee on t' witness stand about them. Hes ta such a thing as a card on thee?"

Jonas took one from his pocket-book and gave it to Amos. "Mr. Jonas Sutcliffe," and on the left-hand corner, "With Joshua Perkins, Esq., Attorney-at-law."

"That is t' varry thing. It will get us an audience, I hev no doubt."

But it was still early when they arrived at Charlton House, and the butler was very uncertain whether my lady would see any one, as he asked if the gentlemen would send their cards.

"Give that fellow thy card, Mr. Sutcliffe. I hevn't such a thing. Thine will do for us both, I'll warrant."

The card interested Lady Charlton. She wondered what two of Perkins' clerks could possibly want with her; besides which, she had on a new morning gown, and was not averse to

displaying herself in it. The early hours of the day were always tedious; any thing that broke their monotony was welcome. So she gave orders to admit the strangers to her presence, and in the interval thought it worth while to assume, for their benefit, her most elegant and dignified attitude.

Amos entered first. She knew him at once, and her heart gave a little flutter of fear. Something in the man's face annoyed her anticipatively, but she rose, against her intention to do so, and with a pleasant smile and greeting offered him her hand.

Amos let his eyes fall on the long, white, jewelled fingers, and answered bluntly, "Nay, my lady, not yet. I'm not one of them that claps hands wi' ivery body. I hev come to ask thee a few questions about my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Joe Braithwaite."

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Braithwaite, I can tell you nothing about the lady."

"Put that down, will ta, Mr. Sutcliffe."

"Mr. Braithwaite, I will not permit the words I say in my own house to be put down. What right have you to come here on any such errand. You will leave my presence at once."

"Well now, I thought I was acting varry considerate. I thought thou would rather hev thy words put down in thy awn house than in a public court-room."

"What do you mean, Mr. Braithwaite?"

"I mean this. There has been some scandalous things said o' my 'daughter, and I am going to mak' them as said 'em stand up to ivery word and prove it, or else pay a few thousand pounds for t' pleasure they took in speaking ill of a better woman than themsens."

"What have I to do with this affair?"

"I sud say a good deal. The report came from thy house."

"I never said any thing against Mrs. Braithwaite. It was Mrs. Lumley and Mrs. Pennington. I can't prevent people talking, Mr. Braithwaite."

"Put that down, Mr. Sutcliffe. And so, Lady Charlton, thou niver said that Mrs. Joe Braithwaite hed driven her husband out of his house?"

"I am not obliged to answer your questions, sir."

"Certainly not. If thou prefers Joshua Perkins to cross-question thee."

"And I am very sure I should not answer Mr. Perkins."

"Then ta would find out varry soon what contempt o' court meant. But please thysen. Either in thy awn house, or in t' public court-house, thou wilt hev to deny, or else prove, all that hes been said about my daughter. If ta likes to do it in public best, I haven't an objection to mak', I'm sure."

"I am sure I never said that Mrs. Braithwaite had driven her husband from his home."

"I'm glad ta' didn't. Put that down, Mr. Sutcliffe. Now thin, did ta say that she hed the devil's awn temper?"

"I am not accustomed to speak of the——— of that person. I did not compare Mrs. Braithwaite with him, in any respect."

"Did ta say that Mr. Latrays went a deal too often to see her?"

"No, sir."

"Did ta iver say that she wouldn't let her husband have a halfpenny to spend, and that he were compelled to work as a common laborer for t' bread he ate and t' roof that covered him?"

"I never said any thing of the kind. I may have heard it said, but I am not responsible for that."

"I sall not mak' thee responsible for any body's lies but thy awn. Did ta iver say that her husband hed deserted her, and that no decent woman ought to speak to her?"

"I heard Mrs. Lumley say that."

"And thou didn't sanction it in any way?"

"I did not quarrel with my friend for expressing her opinion of your daughter. Why should I?"

"But is Mrs. Lumley's opinion thy opinion?"

"Mr. Braithwaite, I'm not forced to tell you my opinions, and I shall not do so."

"To be sure, if ta tells them to nobody else. I hev no objection to thee thinking as bad as iver ta can of Mrs. Braithwaite, if ta doesn't put thy thoughts into words. When women keep their envy and malice in their awn hearts, there's none but God Almighty and t' devil knows it. But when they let their envy and malice bubble out o' their mouths, and good folks are likely to be poisoned wi' such hell-broth, they hev' a right to object to it, I sud say."

"You talk in a very vulgar manner, sir. I am not accustomed to such language."

"Ay, but I'm polite with thee, to what Perkins ud be. But if ta asserts thou knows nothing of Mrs. Braithwaite, and niver said wrong of her, then I hev done with thee, to-day."

"Certainly, I do."

"Hes ta made notes of all that hes been said, Mr. Sutcliffe?"

"I have, sir."

"Then good morning, my lady. And if thou wilt tak' my advice, thou won't say another word against Mrs. Braithwaite. If ta does, thou wilt hev to worry it out wi' Lawyer Perkins."

"I have told you that I know nothing against Mrs. Braithwaite. I am not likely to invent any thing against her."

"I sud think not—now."

"Sir!"

"I am just going, Lady Charlton, but I'm no more inclined to shake hands with you now than I was when I came in. I'm a bit partic'lar in that way. Come, Sutcliffe."

Amos was wise enough to see that he had

frightened Lady Charlton to the very verge of hysteria, and with a comfortable sense of having inflicted a just retribution he left her. He went next to Mrs. Lumley. She met him with considerable bravado; she did not draw back at all from her position. She did think Mrs. Braithwaite had given great cause for unkind criticism. More the pity! People occupying her rank in the county ought to set a good example. She was sorry Mrs. Braithwaite had failed. She believed Mr. Latrays had called three or four times, perhaps oftener. And in Mrs. Braithwaite's position, how imprudent! Even the appearance of evil ought to be avoided. As for Mr. Joe Braithwaite, there was no use denying that every one was sorry for him; for her part she had quite approved the step he had taken. She was very sorry also for Mrs. Braithwaite. No doubt, if she had any feelings she must suffer under the pressure of public opinion, and if there was any thing actionable in what she said, she was willing to take the consequences.

"Varry well, ma'am," answered Amos; "I don't say but what I think better o' thee for standing up to thy words, even if they be lies,

and if ta wants to fight, Amos Braithwaite isn't the one to refuse a challenge. Only I sall fight with my own weapons, and I sall put thy husband in thy shoes. I couldn't hit thee hard enough, but——," pulling out his pocket-book, "I can hit him pretty hard with this bit o' paper, and I'll hev a lot more o' t' same kind o' weapons before to-morrow night. Does ta think I'm going to let thee blackguard my daughter for nothing?"

"I don't blackguard any one, sir. I am a lady. I will not permit you to apply such dreadful words to me."

"Thou art a poor mak' o' a lady, a very poor mak' indeed. Thy lady way o' being sorry for this, and regretting that, is t' varry meanest kind of blackguarding. All t' time thou art defaming an innocent woman thou art praising thysen. 'I'm sorry Mrs. Braithwaite is so wicked; I wouldn't be so wicked. I don't approve of her conduct; my awn is so much better.' Now, then, thou needn't get in a passion. I hev seen thy hand, and I'm going away."

"I consider your coming here at all a very great impertinence, sir."

"Does ta? I sud advise thee to pick thy words a bit better. If ta doesn't I'll hev a civiler person put in this house. Thou had better send Squire Lumley to see me; thou art only making a sight o' trouble for him, and I sudn't wonder if he gives thee some varry plain English for thy folly. Come, Mr. Sutcliffe, I sall not waste any more time and words here."

The visit to Mrs. Pennington was more satisfactory. Mrs. Pennington regretted the evil talk very much. She had never had a wrong thought of Mrs. Braithwaite; she admired her very much in every way. She had always said that Mr. Joe Braithwaite's desire to go back to manufacturing was a most admirable feeling; she thought Mrs. Braithwaite deserved great praise for so pleasantly endorsing it. She was so smooth and complimentary that Amos could do nothing but make her notice that all her opinions had been recorded, and that if further events rendered such a step necessary she would have to abide by them.

It was quite enough. The timid little woman was sick with that vague terror which the least threat of the law can inspire in some breasts. She wept piteously in her own room, and re-

proached without stint that false friendship of Lady Charlton and Mrs. Lumley which had lead her into the dangerous pleasure of defamation.

"Now then," said Amos, "I am going to see the rector. If I can get him on my side, he'll manage these women a deal better than I can, and save me time and worry; for I'll tell thee what, Sutcliffe, I'd rather give a man a good thrashing than bully a fidgetting, nervous woman, howiver much in t' fault she may be."

"For my part, Mr. Braithwaite, I think that husbands ought to be held responsible for the folly of their wives."

Amos looked at the young man with withering sarcasm.

"Thou isn't married, is ta, Sutcliffe?"

"No, indeed, sir."

"I thought so."

"Men should keep their wives in order."

"To be sure."

"If I had a wife—"

"She'd say and she'd do as she liked; and what's more, she'd make thee say and do as she liked. Is ta made o' different clay from other men? Ivery man is Adam, or worse."

"Worse?"

"Ay; if he isn't a fool like Adam, he's varry apt to be a brute thet threshes women and children, and thet hes his own way because it is such a wicked, cruel way that no woman would hev it. Don't thee be too clever, Sutcliffe. It's a fault o' young men, these days. They know every thing but t' main thing, and that is, how very little they do know."

The rector was walking about his garden, with his hands clasped behind his back, and his face full of placid thought. Amos left Sutcliffe in the gig and joined him. They spoke of many things, ere Amos opened the subject upon which he had come. Indeed, he felt some diffidence about troubling this serene, scholarly man with the idle clash of women's tongues, until he asked—

"Have you any special business with me, Mr. Braithwaite? You are a man of such great occupations that I can hardly hope you have done me the simple honor of a call."

"You come very near the truth, sir. While you were in Norway this summer, my son put into execution a plan he has been thinking of for a long time. He went to Man-

chester to learn cotton spinning with his godfather."

"No harm in that. A very creditable movement, I should say."

"People hev made harm out of it. They hev said a deal of harm about his wife——things as seem as if they might be true, but hevn't a word of truth in them."

"I am very glad to hear you say this, Mr. Braithwaite. Then your daughter-in-law approves the step her husband has taken?"

"With all her heart." Then Amos was permitted to make that explanation of affairs which is always satisfactory. He was never interrupted or opposed, and he was distinctly made to feel that he had his listener's sympathy.

"I think I understand the whole position, Mr. Braithwaite."

"I have no doubt you do, sir."

"Mrs. Braithwaite has been placed in a very trying position. Mrs. Clive and myself will do all we can to encourage her in it. Of course we can understand that she would have much preferred her husband to live upon his estate."

"Perhaps she would. But Joe couldn't do it. The Braithwaites were never landed gentry.

We came out of the Mill, and my son is only following his natural instinct in wanting to go back to it. And we like to make money. It is a second life to us."

"I see, I see. And I hope you understand a great deal of money is a great trust, Mr. Braithwaite."

"I'm coming to that, sir. While my Joe is in Manchester, I have promised to be a deal in Bradley, and it's but right I sud do something for t' parish. I heard you were intending to found a new school. I'd like to give £500 to it."

"Thank you, Mr. Braithwaite. It is a great charity. Your gift is munificent."

"Nay, it's nowt but right, and I like to do right if folks will let me. I hev been more to Bradley Church this last half year then I hev been to any other church for twenty years. I like to go to church now, and it's only fair I ought to do for t' parish according to my means. My daughter was fearing that she could never go there again, but I told her that was nonsense."

"It would be very wrong, sir. Mrs. Braithwaite is lady of Bradley-Manor. We all look to her for help and countenance, and a good

example. With so much dissent around us, churchwomen cannot neglect the service and be innocent. There has evidently been a misunderstanding as to her position. I shall take care that it is more clearly and kindly appreciated."

"Now then, if ta says that, I sall just go back to my mill, and look after my looms, and if £500 is not enough for t' school I'll be glad and proud to mak' it more. I like to give to t' church when there's a parson as makes giving a privilege and a pleasure. Good-morning, sir."

"Good-morning, Mr. Braithwaite. My respects—and Mrs. Clive's respects, also—to Mrs. Braithwaite."

And after Amos had gone the rector continued his walk, thinking over the interview, with the flicker of a smile upon his face. But he was a shrewd, as well as a kindly man, and he understood Amos probably better than Amos understood himself. "A little courtesy and simple justice will bring this man into the fold of mother church again, and he is a son that has both the inclination and the power to be generous to his spiritual mother." Thus he

thought, as he entered his wife's sitting-room, in order to enlist her sympathy and help.

Mrs. Clive listened with the calm justice that was part of her nature, and was evidently convinced; for she answered: "Mrs. Braithwaite was never popular; she never tried to be; but there has undoubtedly been misapprehension and I dare say no little unkindness all around. I will make a few calls this week, and I think, after them, people will at least be civil in church. Socially, of course, we are not responsible for the congregation, and really, William, I must say that I, for one, never did like Mrs. Joe Braithwaite, nor even Miss Edith Bradley, very much. You remember that even before she was married she was self-contained and yet self-asserting. Such women are impracticable."

"It is impossible to like every one, but we can be courteous."

"Certainly, we can be courteous. That is one of the duties of our position. Perhaps it is not always easy or pleasant."

"But being a duty we do it?"

"Yes. When did I ever shirk a duty?"

On the next Sunday, Edith was inclined to

remain away from church, for she was quite ignorant of the measures Amos had taken during the week. But he would not listen to her fears. He induced her to dress with more than ordinary magnificence. He wrote and invited Mr. Latrays to meet him after church, and return to Bradley and Bevin with him. He supplemented his cheque of £500 with a £50 note for the poor of the parish; and he looked forward with something like triumph to the morning service.

He was quite satisfied with the result. Mrs. Clive made a point of detaining Edith in order to secure her presence at a meeting to be held at the rectory about the new school. Mrs. Major Pennington was effusively affectionate. Mrs. Lumley swallowed her social pill without a wry face, and Lady Charlton managed her share of the reconciliation by a discreet absence.

It was the rector himself who put Mrs. Joe in her carriage, and then stood a few moments at its side, talking with Amos and Mr. Latrays —humbling himself a little, as a good man will, in order to bring peace and prosperity within the walls of his own Zion.

And when Amos looked at Edith, whose face was flushed with gratification, she answered him with a smile that quite repaid him for the espousal of her cause. And he let Mr. Latrays have more than his share of the conversation, for he was thinking pleasant things of himself —"I did right, I did that! I bullied them envious old women a bit. I put a clear case before t' rector—who hed t' sense to see it—and I handed over a tidy cheque as I sud do, in return for a few words I hedn't power o' saying mysen. Now, then, it's worth while spending a bit o' money to be a kind o' providence in your own corner of t' world, and I think I hev got t' value o' my £550; I do that."

But he never said any thing to Edith about those four morning calls, until one night long after Joe's return. There was some social disturbance at the time, and Amos listened to the gossip about it, with a face that puzzled Edith and Joe, until, with a hearty laugh, he burst into a description of his social tactics. "And I'll tell you what, Joe," he added, "if I hedn't been a tip-top spinner, I'd hev been a tip-top county society leader. I would hev hed no women's quarrels i' my neighborhood, for I

sud hev made them tell t' truth, or else pay such a figure for lying about each other that once in a life-time would hev been as much o' that kind o' luxury as they could afford."

CHAPTER XVI.

JOE HAS A SURPRISE.

"Now let us thank the Eternal Power,
That oft the cloud which wraps the present hour
Serves but to brighten all our future days."

"If solid happiness we prize,
Within our breast this jewel lies;
The world has nothing to bestow,
From our own selves our joys must flow."

IN the mean time cotton-spinning and calico-printing were not all Joe was learning with Samuel Yorke. The man's lofty, simple character and child-like piety were an influence none could habitually resist. There was a spiritual side to Joe's nature which no one had ever suspected, and Samuel Yorke found it out. In their quiet, after-dinner hours conversation always drifted to religious subjects, and Samuel spoke upon them with the fervor of perfect love; for his piety was a conviction resting rather upon experience than upon creed.

"Truth is truth," he would say to Joe, "just as bread is bread, whatever shape t' loaf may be made. I got my religion with t' Methodists, and I like their loaf and stand by it. Just thee try it, Joe."

Joe was not quite ignorant of Methodism. Martha Thrale had done her best to bring him up in her own persuasion, but the very candor and familiarity of its experience had made Joe shrink from it. Youth, contrary to general impression, is apt to be secretive about its deepest emotions; if it is any thing else, the probabilities are that the whole man or woman is shallow. They who prattle about their love affairs to every listener have no depths of tenderness; and much more truly may it be said that they who are constantly talking of their spiritual experiences know nothing of those sweet, secret tokens which are solemn, sacred understandings between God and his children.

But this reticence does not exclude those guarded and intimate communions, those affectionate counsels, which friend and brother have with one another. No confidences that Joe had ever exchanged with Tom Halifax and others of his gay companions were so enthral-

ling as those after-dinner chats with Samuel Yorke when the day was over and the shadows of the evening stretched out. Then the tide of daily life had quite ebbed, and in the stillness and dimness the spiritual perceptions were more sensitive; conscience spoke and could be heard; the soul hearkened after voices from its long-lost home; the men drew nearer to each other and nearer to God.

It was in such hours Joe began to speak of the years which he had wasted, and of the mistakes he had made, very shyly and almost defensively at first, but finally with the full appreciation of all that such loss of life included; for whoever has felt any thing deeply must be haunted by the phantoms of wasted hours that can never return.

On Sunday night a minister famed for his eloquence was to preach, and Samuel Yorke and Joe were both somewhat excited at the prospect. The sermon was all they expected, a magnificent exposition of the attributes of the Prince of the House of David. Joe was particularly affected by the mighty waves of psalmody, the solemn yet hearty enthusiasm with which the worshiping thousands sang,

"Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all,"

and still more by the almost awful grandeur of that most majestic of hymns:

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train:
Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign."

And it seemed to Joe, when the standing multitude blended their voices with the rolling organ in those lines of stern pathos,

"Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see."

that his very soul grew larger, touched infinite heights and depths, and felt, at least for a few moments, the breath of its own divinity.

He did not speak during their ride home; he did not feel able; but it was not necessary for these two men to speak; they understood silence as well. Yet, after they had sat half an hour in the red shadows of the firelight, and

had fully gathered their thoughts and feelings together, Joe said:

"It was a grand sermon! It was a grand service! It was good to be there."

Samuel nodded, looking into Joe's face with shining eyes.

"No worldly pleasures can so stir the soul. I have had music, dancing, travel, good company, fair women, but none of these things ever made me feel immortal."

"It tak's angels to move the great depths of our souls, Joe. Wine, music, dancing, even good women, only move us a bit below the surface. It tak's the everlasting word of God to bring to us any living sense o' immortality."

"I have never known Jesus Christ until this night. The Conqueror of all His enemies, the Avenger of His saints, the Lord of heaven and earth. It was a wonderful picture!"

"It was; and yet Joe, will ta believe it? In t' varry rapture of t' coronation hymn, I was busy thinking o' a little saying o' Saint Peter's, which to my mind describes Jesus of Nazareth in a way poor, sinful, suffering men and women want him most and love him best. '*A man approved of God, who went about doing*

good, healing all that were oppressed.' Thou sees, Joe, a great conqueror would be led wet-shod; blood and fire, and weeping and wailing wherever he went. Oh, my lad, that isn't how I like to think of Him. I know that when His weary feet went to Judea he left blessing and love behind him. I can fancy a traveler passing through a village at that time, and saying, "I found no blind men, and no cripples, and no sick people, for Jesus of Nazareth had just been there."

Joe looked at his friend sympathetically, but he had nothing to answer. When the spiritual nature is above the mortal one it is not easy to say many words. Can the language of flesh and blood interpret the emotions of the spirit? No; when the spirit is master, we must be still, for we have not yet learnt the spiritual tongue. But Joe communed with his own heart, and found the silence sweetly satisfying. For God knows the worshipers unknown to the world, or even to the prophets.

It will be easily seen, then, that the young man was very favorably circumstanced for spiritual growth; and yet there were times when he stood still, when he actually went

backward, for conversion is a slow and tardy miracle, the fruit of sorrow and care and many bitter unquietudes.

Thus at Bradley and Manchester the time went on, every day bringing its own lesson and its own comfort. Christmas was approaching, and Joe began to have strong longings to see again his wife and child. Surely, Yorke would not consider a holiday visit to them a violation of his agreement. He spoke of Christmas often, in the hope that the old man would express some opinion, but Yorke had really no new one to express. He had made a bargain with Joe. Its terms were clear in his own mind; he expected them to be just as clear in Joe's. The thing had been settled beyond future discussion; and Joe felt this. He was sure if Yorke meant him to go home he would speak of it, and if he did not mean it no argument he could use would affect him.

True, he was his own master, and his servitude was of his own will; he could terminate it to-morrow. But he was not prepared to give up his project, to waste his six months' labor, to cast himself adrift on an aimless life. And if for a week's gratification he did this he knew

what self-reproach would follow. And what would Edith say, and his father, and Aunt Martha? In such a case even the whole community must be considered, and Joe felt that the universal verdict would be that of Jacob on Reuben, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." There was therefore only one way in which he could visit Bradley, and that was with Yorke's permission, and Yorke never said a word which implied even a consideration of the subject.

One night he asked with as little concern as he could manage to show, "For how long will you close, at the holidays, godfather?"

"I sall shut up t' warehouse and t' factory on Thursday at t' noon hour, and I sall open again Monday morning. Them 'at likes to stop away at t' New Year can do so; but I'll think better o' them that begins a fresh year wi' honest work instead o' foolishness and senseless feasting."

Now Samuel had a daughter married, and living in London, and Joe made his last insinuation when he asked, "Are you going up to London to see Mrs. Powers and your grandchildren?"

"Nay, not I. I am none fond o' London, and I sud be a good part of two days in a railway carriage. I go and see Mary and t' children every July; they are in t' country then, and that's summat like a holiday."

But not even this leading question procured any allusion to Joe's relations, and he was much annoyed by Yorke's reticence on the subject. But he was wise enough to accept the fact as a positive proof that Yorke did not intend Joe's family to be any factor of the agreement between them.

And Yorke understood Joe's allusions very well. "I know what he's after," he thought, with some real regret, "but if he isn't up to this bit of self-denial, he may as well go home entirely. I'll hev nothing less than I bargained for. It would be a foolish thing to let him go home for a week, and be lord of t' manor, and have every body running after him, and waiting on him, hand and foot, and humoring all his whims, as if he were doing something more than mortal man iver did before. I'll hev no woman melling with my work—aunt or wife—and I sall hold him to his bargain, ivery let-

ter of it, for I'm varry sure it is t' right thing and t' kind thing to do."

However, there is in every human intention some unforeseen element which has not been remembered or reckoned for; and Yorke never thought of Edith coming to Manchester to see Joe. Nobody thought of it. The idea entered into her own head one morning, a few days before Christmas, as she was going over the details of the feast with her housekeeper. She had much to do for her tenants, and when it was all arranged she remembered Joe with a wave of love and pity that brought the tears to her eyes.

"He isn't coming home," she whispered. "He says Yorke will not even speak of it. Very well. Yorke cannot prevent my going to see Joe, and I'll go to-morrow."

So next day she stepped from a carriage in Spinning-Jenny street, Manchester, a beautiful, queen-like woman in purple velvet and ermine furs; and Samuel Yorke, catching a passing glimpse of this feminine apparel, thought it must be his daughter, and hastened to the door to meet her.

"I am Mrs. Joe Braithwaite," she said, with

a smile, and Samuel was quite conquered by its winsome sweetness.

"Thou art welcome," he answered. "Will ta come in?"

But she wanted to see Joe at once, just as he was. And Yorke was not able to resist her pretty impetuosity.

"Well, then, ta shall see him," and he got into the carriage and drove with her to the mill, which was more than two miles away from the warehouse.

Joe was in the dyeing shed, standing among piles and stacks of logs of the oddest looking woods: some were yellow and splintering, some red and scraggy, some purple and solid. Around him were bundles of bark, barrels of salts, and carboys of acids and oils. He was talking earnestly to the master dyer, and Edith saw him before he had any idea of her presence. Fashion had never dressed him to such perfection as labor. Handsome he had always been, but never so handsome in his wife's eyes as at that moment, though he wore a flannel shirt and a flannel apron, though his naked arms were stained with indigo, and

his brown, curly hair was partially covered with a little scarlet cap.

"*Joe! Joe!*" she cried, softly, as she began to pick her way toward him.

And oh! how proud and glad Joe was! It was a moment cheaply bought with six months of toil and self-banishment. In some degree also Samuel Yorke was quite conquered. He saw their joy, and he could not help sympathising with it.

"I'll hev to giv thee a holiday, Joe," he said. "So don thy street clothes and be off wi' thee. I know thou won't be fit to dye cloth to-day."

"Mr. Yorke, couldn't Joe go back to Bradley with me for a week?"

"No, my lass, he couldn't."

"Just for three days, then? I think you might let him have three days. Every one goes home at Christmas, you know."

"No, I didn't know aught of t' sort. Mrs. Braithwaite, this won't do at all. I hev let Joe off to-day. If ta takes him to Bradley now, thou can keep him there. I see plainly that ivery man hes to hev his Eve. If ta takes my advice, thou won't tempt a good man to leave the good work he hes put his hand to."

"You mustn't call me Eve, Mr. Yorke; I do not intend to tempt Joe to leave his work."

"That's right. I don't want any woman interfering with my work, and Joe is my work, for t' next eighteen months."

"I would not interfere for the world, sir. I will do exactly as you say."

"Now thou talks sense. I begin to believe all t' fine things Joe says of thee, and Joe can say a lot when he begins, he can that."

CHAPTER XVII.

AMOS MAKES EDITH A PROPOSAL.

"He hath hands enough for himself and others."
"Power to its last particle is duty."
"We make our fortunes, and we call them fate."
"Every thing that happens is but a link in a chain."

AFTER Edith's visit to Manchester, life at Bradley went on in a very even and satisfactory way. Her affairs were not again discussed, even by the most intimate of friends, and she was every where treated with that marked politeness which is the expression of respect untinged by a familiarity too often apt to verge upon contempt. For Amos had made himself very popular in Bradley; he had given nobly to its charities, and he had a way, not only of interfering in local troubles, but also of making them disappear. It was money in one direction, it was work in another; but it was always help in just the place and way that help was needed.

The rector found his hands wonderfully strengthened by this straightforward, pushing, generous man. And as he stood at Edith's side, very much in the attitude of a watch-dog noting, with pleased or lowering face, any attention or want of attention to his daughter, no one was inclined to incur his ill-will.

For the ill-will of Amos was by no means a bark without a bite. Mrs. Lumley would have said, had she dared, that she and the Squire had been almost worried to death by him. And, indeed, it was well known that the proud woman had been compelled to entreat Edith's espousal of her cause, in order to prevent the auctioneer's flag which Amos had promised them. But having brought her to this point, Amos was glad to put the utmost extent of mercy in the hands of Edith.

"Tell her," he said, "she can send t' Squire to me. If thou says be easy wi' them, I'll warrant I won't be hard."

"Mrs. Lumley wants to see you, herself, father."

"Nay, nay, I'll do no business wi' women. I'm too soft. If she didn't mak' a fool of me, she would call me a brute. But ta can

tell her thou hes saved her home; and for t' rest, let Squire Lumley speak for himsen. If it hurts his pride a bit, it will do him good. He hes never done aught but spend money all his life, and nobody, as I can hear of, hes hed t' gumption to give t' young man a bit of good advice. I sall not let my opportunity pass; he'll be sure to get some truth from me, and happen it will do him good."

The tie between Edith and her father-in-law had become a very strong and tender one. He admired her thoroughly; her business tact elicited his sincere admiration; her little economies were his delight; her beauty, her stately carriage, her rich clothing, her authoritative ways were subjects on which he never wearied of conversation.

Martha Thrale listened to him with many silences and reserves. She liked Edith better than she had ever hoped or intended to like her, but women see women in a way men have not the faculty of seeing them. The pretty wiles and flatteries that were so charming to Amos, and in which he so thoroughly believed, affected Martha with a trifle of wonder and contempt. She saw through them, and won-

dered why Edith should take a bye-way to her object when there was a high-way.

"She is a varry fair specimen of a woman," she would say, a little impatiently, "but she isn't an angel. She hes her faults, like 'all 't' rest of women."

"Then I hevn't seen them, Martha."

"No, because she mak's so much o' thee. One would think thet she niver hed a father of her awn."

"She hed a varry mean one, poor lass; I sud really hope thet she does find me a different mak' o' a man to old Bradley."

"Dear me, Amos! Thou beats every thing. Setting thysen up above a daughter's awn father! It isn't right, ta knows."

"Isn't it? I wouldn't set mysen varry high by topping Luke Bradley. I'm not an angel either, Martha, but I do hope as I am a better sort of a man than Luke Bradley was."

"Well, Amos, Luke Bradley is dead and judged now, and thou hesn't any right to say aught."

"Thet's so, and I hev got a grand upper hand o' him. I hope he knows it, Martha. I sud think he does. There wouldn't be much

use in heving t' upper hand o' Luke, if he didn't know it."

"I hope he knows how good thou hes been to his daughter."

"Ay, I hev been good to Edith. But Edith is a woman as is worth a man going out of his way for."

"She's varry well. I hev known some better, I think."

When conversation got to this point, Amos had always the good sense to turn it upon the subject about which their opinions were unanimous—little Joe.

"Did ta iver see such a fine lad?"

"Niver, Amos, unless it were his father." Then the child's beauty, his spirit, his loving disposition, his bright intelligence, were afresh discussed, and Amos smoked, and talked, and listened, until he was in a state of supreme satisfaction with himself for owning such an admirable son and such an extraordinary grandson.

During the following Easter holidays, Amos was most of his time at Bradley. He had Perkins there, and he went over the accounts of the estate with him, and was much gratified at

the handsome balance. He never took into consideration the retired way in which Edith had been living during the absence of her husband, the omission of the summer travel, and the winter's entertainments; he put the whole sum against his own management. And this not out of any intentional desire to appropriate credit not justly his own, but simply because his tremendous self-esteem led him to make all things feed its never-ceasing hunger.

The Saturday previous to Easter Sunday was a perfectly charming spring day; and in the afternoon Amos asked Edith to take a walk with him.

"Why not drive, father? Then we can take little Joe with us."

"Nay, I don't want little Joe this afternoon, and I am going a way that would be rather hard on thy fine carriage and horses."

"Won't it be hard on me, then?"

"Not a bit. Put on a pair of thick shoes, and I'll give thee my arm."

Edith did not make any further opposition. She had come to understand that her father-in-law's unusual movements always had a purpose in them; and she was a little curi-

ous as to what new thing was now in his mind.

They went leisurely through the park, admiring its excellent condition, and happily sensitive to the freshness and sweetness of the young leaves and the early flowers, though neither spoke very much of such unpractical things. After passing the gates, Amos turned to the left, and followed a rapid, brawling stream some distance up the hill. There was but a bridle path, and the road was rough, but it was one of great beauty.

Edith could not resist the delight of gathering the lovely saffron primroses, and the pale blue-bells, and the tenderly green young ferns. The trees whispered above them, and the water came down in a clear, sparkling volume. There was mystery, and freshness, and beauty all around them; and as the path narrowed, and they were compelled to walk singly, they ceased talking, feeling the companionship of nature to be sufficient.

In a few minutes they came to the head of a glen, and here the water took a leap of fifty feet, making, in its irresistible momentum, what is called in local speech "a force." Amos stood

looking at it with a face full of pleased speculation, while Edith, who had never been there since her childhood, expressed her hearty delight.

"It is the loveliest spot!" she cried; "we must bring little Joe here, and have a picnic. Oh, how exquisitely sweet and fresh and charming it all is! It seems, up here, as if the world had just been made, father."

"Ay, it is a bonny place; but the beauty of it isn't what I'm thinking of, Edith. There is a grand water-power here. I've been up before—looked at it summer and winter. I say, there is a grand water-power here."

"Well, what of that, father?"

"It is a fair, even-down sin and shame to hev so much water doing nothing."

Edith smiled. "I believe, father, that you think forces and becks were only made to run mills."

"Whativer could they do better? So much water—so much water going to waste! It mak's me varry unhappy, Edith."

"This place was for beauty, father—a little covert for the lady-ferns and blue-bells. I didn't know before that I owned such a pretty spot."

"There, now! What good does its beauty do? Who iver sees t' lady-ferns and blue-bells? Who do they feed and clothe? Looking pretty is all varry well, but neither nature nor women folk hev any right to stop there, if they can do aught else."

"There must be some places left for recreation, some places left to delight the eyes, and rest the mind and body."

"I hevn't any objections, I'm sure. There are lots o' bonny places, fit for nothing else, with no water-power worth speaking of. This place hes more privileges."

"I think it has."

"Edith?"

"Yes, father?"

"I'll build Joe a cotton mill right here, if thou art willing. I'll buy t' land of thee at a fair price."

"I do not want a cotton mill so near the park, father. It will spoil the pretty rural village, too."

"What is ta talking about? I sall put up t' handsomest mill that can be made o' stone and mortar. I'll mak' t' chimney so that folks will come miles and miles to hev a look at it;

and I sud like to see t' park or t' village a mill of that kind would spoil."

"Bradley is such a pretty, rural, idyllic little village."

"I don't know what ta means with thy fine words, but I'll tell thee what I think o' Bradley. It wants somebody wi' sense and gumption to do summat for it. Such a lot of tumble-down, thatched cottages and sleepy dunderheads of hedgers and ditchers I niver saw before."

"They are happy and contented."

"Because they know no better."

"Bevin is not very far off. If they want mill work they can go to Bevin."

"They are like childer; they stay at home, even though home is but a middling place. Edith, thou hes no right to hev so much water going to waste. It ought to find good homes and plenty o' bread for a thousand mouths, and mak' money without end for thee and Joe."

"Do you really think that?"

"To be sure, I do. See, now! I'll build a mill. I'll hev it ready for t' looms by t' time Joe is ready for it. I hev vowed that he sall

niver hev part nor lot in Bevin Mill, but I niver said thet I wouldn't build him a mill at Bradley."

"My father always dreaded having a mill near the park. It was for that reason he bought the land around Kattel Force."

"Thy father made his money in mills."

"Yes — but you know the Bradleys were country gentlemen. They had become poor, but they had always been at Bradley. My father, like many other old Yorkshire squires, began manufacturing in order to rebuild the fortunes of the family."

"Well, whativer he did thou can do. I sud think that he bought this varry bit o' land, if he hed an ounce o' sense, with t' sole idea that some o' his descendants would be wise enough to build a mill here. Naturally, he'd want them to hev t' benefit o' such a grand factory site."

"Oh, no," she answered, a little fretfully; "just imagine that cascade of silver water black and foul with the refuse of dyeing vats. And the stream all the way down, with its fringe of primroses and blue-bells, how soon it would become dirty! The flowers would perish, and the clean air be full of smoke."

"Silver water, as ta calls it, will mak' a sight o' gold for thee. And it would be better to see a thousand men, women, and children on its banks than primroses and blue-bells; for I do hope ta doesn't even human beings wi' flowers and ferns and such like."

"It is such a new idea to me, father."

"I'm a bit astonished at that. Thou art such a clever woman, I was sure thou would hev thought of Kattel Force and Joe together, before this."

"No, I had not. Of course I knew that Joe must have a mill somewhere near Bradley, and I was going to speak to you about it. I thought there was plenty of time."

"There is no time to lose if we build our awn mill—not a day. Now then, tak what I hev proposed into thy head, and turn it over a bit. I think ta will see I am right."

"It will need thinking about in many ways."

"Perhaps ta is afraid of annoying Lady Charlton, for ta sees if we build here thy mill-chimney will be in sight from all her front windows, and when t' wind blows from t' east, and it mostly does blow from t' east—she'll get all t' smoke it can send her."

"I should hardly take Lady Charlton into consideration, with any of my plans."

"No, I sud say not. She niver hed any consideration for thee. This is t' varry place for Joe. A good road can be easily made here, and his gig will bring him to thee any time in twenty minutes. And if Kattel suits Joe and thee, thet's t' main thing, I sud say."

"Well, father, I will think of what you have said."

"Do, Edith, my lass. And don't thee waste time. We'll hev to be mak'ing ready for Joe's home-coming. If ta will help me, we'll do our best to mak' no mistakes with him this time."

"You are the dearest, noblest, most generous father in the whole world! It would be a shame to cross you very far."

"Ay, I try to be. And I hev a famous good daughter. A father would do a deal for a lass like thee."

"I will speak to Perkins, if you don't mind. He may know of some more suitable place."

"Ay, he may—and he may not."

"If we can buy a suitable site not on our own land, all the better."

"Mebbe. But speak to Perkins if ta likes. He's not a bad one to ask; for if there's a bit o' land, far or near, in ta market, he generally knows all about it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AMOS BRAITHWAITE AND SON.

"Man is his own star, and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man
Commands all light, all influence, all fate.
Nothing to him falls early, or too late.
Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,
Our fatal shadows, that walk by us still."

AMOS had acceded to his daughter's wish to consult Perkins with apparent satisfaction; and with almost unnecessary haste he decided privately to follow Edith's intention. He went early on Monday morning to see the lawyer, so early that he had to seek him at his residence. The two men knew each other too well to attempt deception, and Amos, without any preparatory explanation, said, "I'm before business hours, Perkins, but I hev a good reason for bothering thee. I want to build Joe a mill on Kattel. Mrs. Braithwaite is afraid o' spoiling her view and her rural village and

thinks thou can mebbe find her a better site. Now, I know thou can't, and if ta could, I don't want any other site found. Think of it. Can ta find another place half so suitable?"

There was no offer of reward made, nothing approaching the idea of one good turn deserves another insinuated, and yet Perkins, looking steadily at Amos, fully understood that an advantageous offer had been made him. He stroked his chin a few moments, and seemed lost in a deep reflection on the water-power of the locality, but his answer was as definite as Amos could desire.

"I really do not know of any site but Kattel that could be procured for the purpose of building a mill. There is a bit of land on Thorny Beck, but it belongs to Lady Charlton, and she refused to sell it to John Nelson because he wanted to build a mill on it."

"I want thee to tell Mrs. Braithwaite that. Don't forget to tell her it, whativer ta does. I think it will do a deal towards making her settle on Kattel."

"I don't see how it can."

"Because ta niver studied up women; they aren't in thy books. Tell Mrs. Braithwaite

about Thorny Beck, and I sudn't wonder if she settles at once, just as I want her to."

Having opened the subject, Amos did not allow it to drop. Whatever Edith thought, Amos had made up his mind that there ought to be a mill on Kattel Force. As for the dead Bradley buying the land purposely to prevent it, Amos was not deterred by that consideration. "He ought to hev hed more sense"; and so deep and so deceitful above all things is the heart that he was undoubtedly more pleased with the notion because it contradicted a pet prejudice of his old enemy. A fine mill on that fine eminence would be a pleasant sight to him. Braithwaite Mill on Kattel Force. "My word," he thought, "if Luke Bradley can know it and see it!"

As for Edith she made as brave a struggle to preserve her little glen as could be expected. She spoke to Perkins and directed him, if possible, to find other land, even though the price was a little extravagant. She told him frankly that she did not want to destroy the lovely stream, and transform the quiet hamlet into a dirty, turbulent mill village.

But Perkins had already settled the matter

in his own mind. He saw now why Amos had helped the Wesleyans so liberally to turn the old mill into a chapel, and he could not help admiring the forethought of his old client. He was almost quite sure that the plans Amos had made for Joe and Edith would be, in the end, very wise ones, and that he would best serve her interests by encouraging them. In fact, he could find no single reason for discovering another location to please Edith, and he could find at least a dozen good ones for pleasing Amos.

So when he visited Bradley on the subject, he was very regretful, but also very positive. He had been able to find nothing at all suitable but a tract on Thorny Beck, and it was three miles away."

"Is there a good road to it?"

"Oh, yes, a very good road."

"That might do. Who owns it?"

"Lady Charlton."

"Will she sell?"

"She was anxious to sell until she heard it was to build a mill on. Then she flatly refused. But I might hev known she would, for she refused John Nelson, and made some varry

contemptuous remarks about mill gentry, at t' same time, which is neither here nor there. I thought as you and her were friends she'd mebbe not mind your mill. But she wouldn't hear of it."

"Oh, indeed! She wouldn't hear of it?"

"She says it is so unpleasant to see mills. They are so suggestive of work and poverty, and vulgarity, and a deal of other disagreeable things."

"But, Mr. Perkins, if we build on Kattel Fell, it seems to me that her ladyship will be obliged to endure the sight of a mill."

"I'm afraid so, Mrs. Braithwaite. But you see Mr. Joe is to be considered first."

"I should think so."

"And it is your awn land."

"Of course."

"And when you can't do what you want—"

"Then I must do as I can."

"Just so, Mrs. Braithwaite."

And the end of the matter was that Amos got his own way. Before the spring was quite over, men began to dig up the blue-bells and primroses to a level, and grade a wide road, and then to lay a foundation of mighty strength,

upon which, month after month, rose gradually a tall, gigantic pile of masonry, something like a model prison, a great, vast, empty shell of enormous strength, into which Joe was to bring the steam and metal witchcraft of Lancashire.

Nearly ten years had now passed since that morning when Joe took his father's check for £5000 and left him. If any one had then told the handsome, rather conceited youth the point to which he would arrive in ten years, he would have regarded his life as a failure, and felt anger at the supposition. But our views of life up to a certain age constantly change; the success of one decade is not the aim of another, and Joe, sitting with his godfather, on the last night of his apprenticeship, was satisfied with the prospect before him.

"Thou art ready for work, now, Joe. Thou art a good man, and a good cotton spinner, and I'm proud of thee in both ways. What wilt ta do with thysen? Has ta thought of it?"

"I have been thinking a great deal of it."

"Will ta ask Mrs. Joe to build thee a mill? Thou could tak' her as thy partner, J. & E. Bradley, Cotton Spinners."

"No, no, my wife is my wife, and I'll not mix her with my business. I am going to ask my father to lend me sufficient money to begin business in a rented mill. If he will not do it, I shall ask you, godfather."

"Thou ask thy father. He niver said he would not lend thee money, and if he did the sooner he breaks a wicked oath the more of a man he will be. I hev told him that, in so many plain words before this. Give thy father a chance to be a good father, by being a good son. I'm none afraid but what Amos Braithwaite will do about right for thee."

The next day Joe went home, and Edith, radiant and beautiful, was waiting for him. When he stepped from the train to the platform, it was with the free, independent air of a man who knows the cunning in his ten fingers is good for his fortune, and Edith recognized his manhood and his authority. He spoke to the coachman differently and the man answered him differently. In less than an hour the wife and the servants understood that he had come home as master.

The first persons he saw on entering the Bradley parlor were Martha Thrale and his

father. Martha was putting the last festival touches to the tea-table. Amos was serenely smoking at the window; Joe went straight to him. He put out his hand, and said frankly, "Father, I was very wrong not to take your advice ten years ago. I am very sorry for my folly. I hope you will forgive me."

"Say no more, Joe. I hev forgiven thee long since. Sam hes written reg'lar to me. I know all about thee, my lad."

"I'm so happy to see you here."

"I hed to come here. When ta left thy wife I were forced to look after her for thee. Dost ta think I was going to let Tom, Dick, and Harry hev leave and license to say this or that about her? Not I! I don't know whativer she would hev done without me." And Amos laughed heartily as he said, "Ay, ta may well kiss that big lad o' thine, Martha; I hev heard tell that he is as hot a Methodist as thysen now."

It is not often that anticipated joys realize their promise, but this reunion did. It was perhaps the happiest evening in all the experience of Amos. He had so much to tell, and so much to listen to, and Edith's praises of his

kindness and wisdom were exceedingly pleasant things to listen to.

In the morning he said to Joe, "I want thee to tak' a walk with me, Joe. I hev summat to show thee." And as they neared Kattel he asked, "Is ta going to stick to cotton spinning, my lad?"

"Yes, I am, father."

"Wilt ta tak me as thy partner?"

"Father, do you really mean it?"

"Do I iver talk on both sides o' my mouth? I hed a bit o' brass lying idle, so I bought some land on Kattel, and I hev built a mill on it, for I tell thee, Joe, it was a sin to see all that water going to waste. Now, if ta likes, thee and me will fill that mill with spinning-jennys. And, my lad, we'll drive all Wharfdale before us. Thou can manage t' cotton mill, and I'll stick to t' wool and Bevin."

"I never knew I had such a good father. Why, you have been thinking of me and planning for me all the time I have been away."

"To be sure I was. Does ta think I was going to let Sam Yorke take my place? Is it a bargain? Sall it be Amos Braithwaite and Son, Cotton Spinners?"

"I shall be the proudest man in Yorkshire when that day comes."

"Then thou can begin to be proud this varry hour. See there! That is our mill, Joe. It wants naught but t' looms and t' hands; thou can get them as soon as iver ta likes."

A very happy summer followed this arrangement. Amos and Joe were so busy that the long days were far too short, and Amos often wished "time were nobbut in t' market, so as he could buy a few hours ivery day at any quotation." What ridings over to Bevin and Bradley there were! What consultations, what extemporized meals in both houses. Martha and Edith grew really fond of each other, while they discussed the uncertainty of dinners and teas, and the necessity of strengthening food for such busy men.

But time makes all events a little stale, and even the opening of the big mill was forgotten in a newer event of more personal importance, the advent of Joe's second son. When Martha Thrale lifted the little crying mite of humanity in her arms, she forgave Edith every thing. And there was no hesitation about the name

of this boy. He was called Amos as soon as he came into the world.

Amos was wonderfully delighted. He gave all his hands a holiday and a big feast, and he had again a desire to go into Bradford and buy a piece of jewelry or silverware; this time he did it. And if the newly arrived Amos Braithwaite, Junior, could have used a full silver dinner service he would have received it from the proud and happy grandfather.

Just after making this delightful outlay, he met Joshua Perkins, coming up Darley street. "Hes ta heard?" he asked, in a lofty, exultant tone. "I told thee my Joe was no fool. T' mill is doing beyond ivery thing. T' little rural village is getting to be a busy town, and yesterday, Perkins, there was another Amos Braithwaite arrived in this world."

"It is rather hard for a man to be a fool that hes got a rich father, a rich wife, and a rich godfather."

"Stop thy talk, Perkins. There's many a lad hes hed rich upholders—richer than Joe hes, but there's varry few lads who, if they hed lost four years and £5,000 in a lawyer's office, would hev hed spirit enough to kick t' law and ivery

thing about t' law to the 'back-of-beyond,' and then go to work like a man."

"Mr. Joe married?"

"I'm coming to that. There's a fewer still, who, when they make a mistake in their wedding venture, hev t' sense to find out what is wrong, and then set themselves to put it right. Why, if my Joe married for love now, he'd hev nobody but Edith Bradley, even if she worked in a mill and hadn't a sixpenny bit."

"It's a topsy-turvy world, Braithwaite. We'll see how things are ten years after date. There'll be changes, changes no doubt, Mr. Braithwaite."

"There will be one change we won't wait ten years for, Perkins. We are going to spend no more money on lawyers. We hev got a lawyer in t' firm now. Good afternoon to thee."

However, this was but a passing breeze; for one morning, more than ten years afterwards, Perkins went to Bevin Mill to see Amos and found that he had gone to Bradley. He followed him there, and was told he was in the summer-house with the children. There Perkins soon came upon him, as happy as a boy

among Joe's eldest four children. Amos, Junior, was busy pulling to pieces a bit of toy machinery, and Jean Braithwaite, aged six, was examining her grandfather on the history of Jack-the-Giant-Killer, an examination from which the self-made man came out with discreditable confusion on account of defective early training.

He put Jean off one knee and Sam off the other, but it was with difficulty he could get away from the children, and Perkins wondered "if they weren't a great trouble to him."

"Not nearly so much as thou art. Whativer does ta want to-day?"

"Barley-steads is in t' market, and Mr. Joe wants to buy it. I told him he sud know first of any one."

"Joe is up to t' mill."

"My word, Amos, what a change that mill hes made in Bradley. T' village is a big town, and I hear Mr. Joe is to be mayor."

"Thou hears a deal o' nonsense. Joe hes more sense than to mind ivery body's business. And I told thee what t' mill would do. If owd Bradley hed hed as much sense as a hank o' wool he would hev turned thet water into gold

thirty years ago. A man hes no right to let so much water-power go to waste."

"I heard also thet Mr. Joe was going to run t' Conservative ticket for parliament."

"Joe could do it, but he's far too good a man for such a job. James Sedbergh left it because of its irregularities and t' bad hours it kept. My Joe is thet way too."

Here they were interrupted by a glad cry of "There's grandpapa, there's grandpapa!" and Joe and Edith and the children came down the lilac avenue together. "Thou'lt hev to stay all night, thou sees, Perkins, but thou can talk Barley-steads over with Joe, and tak' thy time about it. And in t' morning thou sall go to church wi' me. Thou needs a good, rousing sermon I'll be bound."

Joe was now a handsome, portly man, with the grave look of one who carries the daily bread of a whole little community in his hands; and it was pleasant to see how thoughtful Edith was of this, and how she quieted the children, and contrived that Joe and Perkins should get away unobserved to the library after tea.

Pleasanter still to see the whole family tending churchward next morning, Amos trying to

subdue his usual pompous, bustling way and set an example to all of grave and serious attention. He had Edith on his arm, Joe and the children followed, and Perkins and Martha Thrale completed the family group. And though Perkins did not get the rousing sermon Amos thought he needed, he heard a very earnest talk on a subject that seemed to him, when he looked at Joe, singularly appropriate, "*Redeeming the time*"—redeeming the time wasted through folly or mistake or misapprehension, holding it for richest truth

> "That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

THE END.

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